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THE Nation

AMERICA'S LEADING LIBERAL WEEKLY SINCE 1865

VOLUME 152 NEW YORK · SATURDAY · FEBRUARY 8, 1941 NUMBER 6

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Published weekly and copyright, 1941, in the U. S. A. by The Nation, Inc., 55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. Washington Bureau: 856 National Press Building, Washington, D. C. Entered as second-class matter, December 13, 1879, at the Post Office of New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

The Shape of Things

GRAZIANI'S DECIMATED ARMY IS FALLING back on Bengazi between which and Tripoli stretch 400 arid miles. No doubt Mussolini has ordered a desperate last stand at this point but there seems little doubt that the well-led and confident British troops will repeat their successes of Bardia and Tobruk. It is true that the Italians, are now receiving assistance from the German air force, which has been attacking British supply ships along the Libyan coast. But this aid does not seem to be on a scale sufficient to turn the tide. Once Bengazi is captured it appears likely that General Wavell will call a halt, for at this stage in the war the capture of Tripoli hardly seems worth the risks involved. His campaign has shattered all Italian hopes of invading Egypt and has provided him with a well-protected outpost in the comparatively fertile Barce peninsula where a small force will serve to keep an eye on Graziani. The bulk of the now seasoned British Near Eastern army should thus be available for action elsewhere. Already at least one division which took part in the capture of Sidi Barrani has been switched 1,500 miles to the Red Sea and has now penetrated deep into Eritrea. There and in Ethiopia the Italians are in a sorry plight with the British advancing at many points and Haile Selassie's rearmed warriors rising everywhere in the rear. Mussolini's East African empire seems ripe for dissolution. The essential British base in Egypt is thus secured on all sides and new operations become possible. It is reported that General Wavell has promised reinforcements to Greece in the near future. Their arrival at Salonika would have diplomatic as well as military significance.

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WITH THE VOTING OF A THREE-DAY LIMIT to general debate, the Lease-Lend Bill seems likely to achieve passage of the House by the end of the present week. It was approved by the Foreign Affairs Committee by a majority of 17 to 8 after the inclusion of amendments which do nothing to weaken the bill. An attempt by part of the Republican minority to turn it into a straight "lend" bill was defeated. But this plan has been commended by Mark Sullivan and appears to have the support of important business interests. From their point of view a loan to the British government, which would

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enable it to continue placing orders on its own account, is preferable to a plan which will channel all purchasing for Britain through our own procurement authorities. Nor is it hard to see why, when it is considered that up to now British orders have been filled on a much larger profit basis than is permitted on our own defense contracts. It would not be surprising, therefore, to find this straight loan plan being pushed again in the Senate. It is not likely to succeed any better there than in the House but it may serve to cause additional delay in a debate which threatens, in any case, to drag on into March. The Senate isolationists are a definite minority but they are well schooled in the tactics of obstruction and can be counted on to fight a bitter rearguard action. But there is increasing evidence that public opinion overwhelmingly favors the bill and we hope that the Senate will be made so aware of this fact that it will shorten its usual leisurely procedure. The suggestion is being made that there is no need for haste since the bill cannot give the British material aid in resisting the expected spring assault. But its passage will afford them moral aid by letting them know that succor is on the way.

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THE NAZI CAMPAIGN TO FORCE LAVAL ON Marshal Pétain appears to have succeeded, and by the end of the week he is expected to be in Vichy, endowed with greater power than before. The executive powers of the French government, it is reported, are to be concentrated in a four-man board, over which the new Gauleiter will preside. This is only a first step: the next move will be to obtain from Vichy the kind of "collaboration" which Hitler needs to finish off Britain quickly. It cannot be doubted that his requirements go far beyond economic cooperation. He wants use of the French fleet and bases, and military control of Tunisia if not of other colonies. These needs grow in urgency with the progressive deterioration of the Italian position. Moreover, there is good reason to suppose that they are essential to plans for the spring campaign which may combine an attack on Gibraltar with an attempted invasion of Britain. The French fleet is still fairly powerful and might prove invaluable by creating a diversion which would keep the British navy away from the Channel. But Hitler's hopes of supplementing his own inadequate fleet are still thwarted by the obstinate refusal of Marshal Pétain to accept the Nazi interpretation of "collaboration." Nor would it suffice to push him aside, for no Frenchman acceptable to the Nazis, and Laval least of all, could command the allegiance of France and particularly of the North African army. In this connection it is noteworthy that General Weygand, answering the recent radio appeal of De Gaulle, referred to the armistice "which ended the struggle for France." Listeners must have realized that, if the Free French want to denounce the armistice, Hitler wants it rewritten in his favor.

JAPAN APPEARS TO HAVE WON A COMPLETE, though bloodless, victory in the first stage of its drive for mastery of Southeastern Asia. As the price for mediation of the undeclared war between Thailand and French Indo-China, it is reported to have exacted concessions from both countries which will leave the Japanese in complete economic and military control of the area. In a separate agreement concluded simultaneously with the armistice between Thailand and Indo-China, the French are reported to have yielded Japan a free hand in the exploitation of Indo-China's rich natural resources, including a virtual monopoly on all exports of rice, rubber, and coal. They are also said to have granted Japan the right to establish military garrisons on the border between Indo-China and China, to allow Japan free use of all present air bases in Indo-China, and to permit the establishment of a Japanese naval base at Cam Ranh Bay and a defense concession at Saigon. The only barrier to complete Japanese control of South Indo-China—a development invaluable as a stepping-stone for an attack on Singapore, the East Indies, or the Philippines—is a reported appeal of French authorities to the British. Should this fail, Japan is likely to postpone immediate efforts for the conquest of China, and devote itself in the coming weeks to the easier task of picking off sections of the French, Dutch, and British empires. This effort will in all probability be timed to coincide with the threatened Nazi offensive against the British Isles.

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ALTHOUGH THE RIVER PLATE CONFERENCE was called primarily to take economic measures for the relief of land-locked Bolivia and Paraguay, its proceedings reveal substantial progress toward a more substantial Pan-American unity than has hitherto prevailed. Particularly significant is the fact that Argentina, the traditional stumbling-block to Pan-American unity, has in this instance taken the leadership not only in offering concessions to the smaller states but in safeguarding the rights and interests of the United States so as to prevent the conference from becoming narrowly regional in character. While no sweeping economic readjustments are expected to result from the conference, agreement has already been reached on a number of projects which should work to the advantage of the five countries represented. These include suspension of the most-favored-nation clause in concessions made to Bolivia and Paraguay; special arrangements facilitating banking, credit, and foreign exchange operations among the five countries participating in the conference; arrangements for the setting up of free port zones; and agreement to study the possibility of organizing a regional customs union, lowering of consular fees, and unification of customs regulations. Nazi spokesmen may profess complete indifference as to the outcome of the conference on the ground that it is concerned entirely with local issues, but they cannot

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fail to be disturbed by this tangible evidence of new unity in the Western Hemisphere—a unity which is a direct answer to Nazi policy.

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MELLON'S ALUMINUM COMPANY OF AMERICA has been indicted with the German dye trust and four other concerns for a long-standing conspiracy to curtail the supply of magnesium, a vital war material useful chiefly for airplanes, in both this country and Great Britain. A few weeks ago, it will be recalled, the aluminum trust was on the carpet because the Reynolds Metal Company was unable to get enough raw aluminum from it to take care of orders from airplane companies. The present charges are even more serious. It appears that the Dow Chemical Company, America's only producer of magnesium, has been exporting it to Germany for 21 cents a pound while maintaining a 30-cent price in this country. Exports to England were limited to such English concerns as were licensed by the German dye trust. Complete monopoly of the important metal—one-third lighter than aluminum—was assured by a patent pool in which the Dow Chemical Company and the German dye trust participated. Whether because of the high price or of undisclosed restrictions, American production of magnesium has been allowed to fall far behind that of Germany. Quite apart from any illegal conduct that may be established by the courts, the situation in both the magnesium and the aluminum industries provides a graphic illustration of the fact that monopoly is the worst enemy of the technological progress so essential to national defense.

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WILLIAM GREEN'S CLAIM THAT A MAJORITY of Ford workers at the River Rouge and Lincoln plants have joined A. F. of L. unions and his bland announcement that "none of these employees was ever discriminated against by the management of the Ford Motor Company because of membership in A. F. of L. unions," are both mysterious and ominous. On the face of it, it does not seem possible that the A. F. of L. has succeeded where the more powerful and aggressive C. I. O. has encountered such difficulties during the past few years; and it is significant that Mr. Green refrained from being specific. He gave no figures and he failed to make it clear whether he was talking about the long-established craft unions or the federal union chartered when the United Automobile Workers split. His announcement raises the suspicion that the A. F. of L. may have offered Ford what amounts to a company union wearing the A. F. of L. label—the federation has done just that in other instances—but there are no indications so far that Ford would accept even a docile union that carried the name of an "outside organization." Only one thing is clear. Mr. Green has in effect exonerated Ford of discrimination against unions just at a time when the issue was at last being raised in connection with defense contracts and when one minor contract had been withdrawn from Ford for his refusal to accept the labor clause.

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DEMOCRACY GAINED A LOCAL VICTORY OF considerable importance when a jury in Bridgeport, Connecticut, acquitted Joseph Spell of the charge of raping Mrs. John K. Strubing, Jr. Spell is a Negro; he was employed as butler and chauffeur by the woman who accused him of attacking her. He admitted freely that he and Mrs. Strubing had had sexual relations and that he had driven her on the same night to the Kensico reservoir near where she was found dripping and hysterical early in the morning. All these facts, colored by class and race prejudice, might easily have tipped the scales against Spell. The evidence pointing to his guilt was, to be sure, unconvincing and contradictory, and its credibility was not increased by the obvious mental confusion of the alleged victim, who was the only eye-witness. But in many circumstances and places, such factors would have weighed very little against the emotions aroused by the charge of rape brought by a white woman against a colored man. That they brought a verdict of acquittal in this case is a tribute to both the men and the women who made up the jury and to Judge Foster whose charge was a model of fairness and detachment.

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A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT WAS ESTABLISHED last week when, upon order of the Court of Appeals, Charles J. Hendley was compelled to surrender the membership list of the New York Teachers Union to the Rapp-Coudert legislative investigating committee. The legislative committee has insisted that it required the lists in order to uncover possible "Communists" in the school system. But as it has never indicated how it will distinguish between Communists who happened to be on the list and ordinary union members, there is reason to suspect that the step is intended as an attack on the union itself. Frightened by the unfavorable publicity resulting from the investigation, a number of teachers have already deserted the union, and the organization's efforts to obtain a restitution of full state aid for education has been severely hampered. If teachers protected by tenure can be intimidated by these tactics, there would seem no limit to the havoc that might be wrought if, say, the employees of a Ford or a Girdler could be forced to yield their union lists to an investigating committee set up by a labor-baiting legislature. Since the highest court in the state has upheld the procedure, labor's only protection lies in the passage of the Zimmer bill in Albany, which would make the seizure of labor-union membership lists illegal.

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Close the Blockade

IN the field of war diplomacy no problem is more difficult than the question of how to conduct relations with Russia. Is the Soviet Union to be treated as an irreconcilable enemy or as a potential ally? We know that relations between Moscow and Berlin are officially friendly, that Russia has recently undertaken to increase greatly its exports to Germany, and that, with the approval of the Comintern, Communist parties in the democratic countries carry on campaigns calculated to react harmfully against the British war effort. On the other hand, the Soviets are still aiding China and to this extent are impeding the axis. Moreover, there is good reason to believe that Moscow's influence in the Balkans has acted as a partial check to Hitler's plans for a drive through Bulgaria or Yugoslavia.

The problem has recently been put up to Washington as the result of pleas from the British government for aid in plugging what it believes to be the worst hole in the blockade—the Pacific route to Vladivostok. This request has been received somewhat coolly in the State Department which, according to I. F. Stone's report on page 147, has been confused by conflicting advices from London. Be this as it may, it is unlikely that the British government would complain were Washington to decide that provisioning Germany through the Russian channel was hardly consonant with a policy of all aid to Britain.

During the past twelve months Soviet imports from this country of such commodities as cotton, copper, wheat, hides and skins, brass, lard, and machine tools have shown a big increase over 1938. These are all articles of strategic importance and among them are commodities that Russia has agreed to furnish to Germany. While it is not thought that these American goods are actually being shipped across Siberia to the Reich, there is good reason to suppose that by filling the requirements of Eastern Siberia they enable the Moscow government to release equivalent quantities from stocks in European Russia. An additional cause for concern in London is a recent large Soviet order for oil-drilling equipment. At present Russia can spare little oil to Germany but it has huge reserves waiting to be tapped and every new well brought into production is a potential source of supply for Hitler's war machine.

Various government departments are said to be studying the questions raised by these facts but Secretary of State Hull has been inclined to belittle the extent of the leakage through Vladivostok. It is also being pointed out that Russia's increased purchases in the United States in most cases are cancelled out by the absence of normal imports from the British Empire. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the U. S. S. R. has contracted to supply Germany with foodstuffs and raw materials of the same kind which it is buying from us, ostensibly for home consumption. It is undeniable that without our assistance Russian surpluses available for export will be reduced.

The question to be considered then is whether we should stop this trade with Russia altogether or, at least, reduce it to its pre-war volume. It may be argued that such action ought to be avoided lest we offend Moscow and drive the Soviets into closer bonds of friendship with Germany. For our part we are more inclined to agree with the view set forth by Louis Fischer on page 146. We do not believe that if Britain and America are sufficiently kind to Stalin he will be weaned from his unnatural liaison with Hitler and hurl the Red Army into the fight against fascism. But we find it equally hard to believe that he can easily be pushed into joining Germany as a military ally for he is well aware that the Third Reich is as dangerous to its friends as to its enemies. Under these circumstances it seems stupid to try and appease Russia by refraining from actions which otherwise are judged desirable. The only result would be an invitation to Moscow to make threats and levy blackmail.

On the other hand, it would be futile to embargo or limit exports to the Soviets without taking equally strong action in regard to Japan. There is good reason to believe that the Japanese are acting as trade agents for Germany, particularly in Latin America. But still more important is the strategic aid which Japan affords to the axis by serving as a standing threat to American and British interests in Asia. And with its steady encroachment on Indo-China this threat grows more serious. Yet we are continuing to underpin Japan's rickety economic system despite moral embargoes and export licenses. It is true we no longer allow it to buy aviation gasoline but we permit the purchase of slightly inferior grades which help to keep its planes in the air even if they are a trifle slowed down. Nor have we stopped selling strategic metals to Japan, including some in short supply here.

The growing demands of the defense program are ample excuse for the institution of a strict system of priorities for exports in respect of most goods now reaching Russia and Japan. Home demand should be satisfied first; then the requirements of Britain and its allies and of Latin America. It is improbable that much would be left over except in the case of cotton, wheat, and gasoline, and in regard to the last of these it should be noted that domestic consumption is rising so rapidly that export losses due to the war have already been made up. However much Russia might resent interference with its blockade-busting activities, its wrath would be tempered by the simultaneous blow to Japan's war potential. Hitler is working hard to bring the Soviet Government and Japan together but Russia's terms are believed to be stiff and any weakening in the Japanese position would make them stiffer. It is certainly not to our advantage

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for these two powers to reach an understanding about the division of the Far East. Now is the time to discourage such a development and to plug up a leak in the British blockade which is apt to grow larger if left unmended.

Labor's Plan for Steel

BEHIND the C. I. O.'s badly written and clumsily presented "plan" for steel lies a story as dramatic as that behind the Reuther plan. A preview of the possibilities of coordinated planning in the steel industry was given by our Washington editor in his dispatch on Little Steel Soviets in the issue of December 28. The proposals now submitted to the President by Philip Murray provide a complete picture of the idle or half-used facilities which could be brought into the defense program if the steel industry were treated as one production unit. Every steel company has a "top scheduling clerk," whose job it is so to arrange the filling of orders as to get the utmost use of that company's facilities. The C. I. O. proposes that the President give the entire steel industry a top scheduling clerk in the shape of an industry council equally representative of capital and labor, with a government representative as chairman. The C. I. O. declares that although the steel industry claims to be working at 99 per cent of ingot capacity, a total of 5,920,195 net tons of steel melting and finishing capacity is still idle. It is idle because there is no one person or agency to do for the whole industry what the top scheduling clerk does for one steel company, itself often a conglomeration of many scattered plants.

The obstacle to the creation of such an agency is that it would take business away from the larger companies, now bloated with orders, and pass more business on to smaller companies, many of them partially idle and a few wholly idle. According to the C. I. O. report:

> Each of these [steel] companies is operating as an entity unto itself, and is engaged in compiling the largest and most diversified possible backlog of orders. This is done to assure profitable operations as far into the future as possible. This may be economically desirable to the individual company, but, permitted to run its course unchecked, it can be disastrous to our defense program. Much of the demand for increased ingot or certain finishing capacity is evidence of mal-distribution of orders. This "shortage" is a company shortage, not a national inadequacy. Over-taxed and idle facilities—similar or complementary—are found side by side, but in different companies, and due primarily to this illogical distribution of orders and lack of coordination.

Within the boundaries of any individual company, no such lack of planning is permitted, for it would be as costly to the individual company as the over-all planlessness is to the national economy and to the defense program. "Each integrated steel company," the report explains, "constantly coordinates its facilities with the needs of its customers. One such firm operates its own pig-iron and steel-making furnaces." In these furnaces the company makes its steel ingots. From these ingots, with its finishing capacity, the company makes sheets, tinplate, tubular goods, structural shapes, wire, and nail products. Combined, these finishing capacities considerably exceed the company's ingot capacity, yet by spreading the peak months for various finished products over the year, it is "able to meet all the demands of its customers for finished products with its existing steel melting facilities." This coordination is the work of the top scheduling clerk, and it is just such a function which the C. I. O. would give its proposed industry council.

The C. I. O. does not think that coordination would make expansions of plant unnecessary but it believes present programs for expansion are as ill-planned as is the industry as a whole. "Expansion plans already announced," the C. I. O. report declares, "are mostly for steel plants that neither have the necessary working force or housing facilities for an increased working force, while more than a score of steel ghost towns have industrial buildings to house new steel facilities, a well-rounded working force to man such facilities, and adequate housing to care for the working force." These expansion programs, like present production programs, owe their weaknesses to the fact that they are geared to provide the highest profit to the big steel companies rather than the maximum output for defense.

There is much besides the mere idea of coordination in the C. I. O. report. It is full of concrete suggestions not now being applied because individual steel companies have no profit interest in applying them. The C. I. O. wants a wider application of the Bessemer flame-control process developed by Jones and Laughlin but adopted by few other companies. It believes the steel castings section of the industry is capable of producing cast armor plate, and thinks funds should be made available for experimentation. If successful, this would reduce the serious shortage of armor plate. Many production hours are lost because mills must cease operation while "mill changes" are made for different types of orders. The C. I. O. believes half this time could be saved by dividing orders among the different companies on a basis of efficiency and specialization rather than competition. Many of the smaller or medium-size companies cited by the C. I. O. have "lopsided facilities," too much ingot capacity for their finishing capacity, or vice versa. Comparatively small R. F. C. loans to build up the missing factors would immensely increase their usefulness, but they lack sufficient prominence or "pull" to obtain the loans. *The Nation* believes that sooner or later defense needs will drive the government to the use of

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these suggestions. It also believes that since the big steel companies by their very nature will oppose any such program as a threat to their profits, a plan of this kind can only be put across by establishing an industrial council, and giving labor equal representation in it.

The Moral Embargo

BY LOUIS FISCHER

THE recently announced decision of the United States government to lift the moral embargo on shipments of certain commodities to the Soviet Union seems to me a bad one chiefly because its consequences may be detrimental to American interests. It could easily contribute to an improvement of Russo-Japanese relations.

Russia's present embarrassing international situation arises from the exposure of its western frontier to German pressure and of its eastern expanses to simultaneous Japanese pressure. Russia is too weak to cope with Germany or to antagonize Germany. But if it could weaken or divert Japan its position would be improved and the fear of Germany lessened.

Russia can weaken Japan by supporting Chinese armed resistance. It has done this. But the method is expensive. The Russian goverment started aiding Spanish Loyalists in October, 1936; when the Chinese "incident" began, Moscow sent arms to China, and Spain got fewer. During the Czech crisis beginning May, 1938, both China and Spain received fewer planes, and it was Czechoslovakia's turn to get something from Russia. But, principally, Russia was worried about the possibility of becoming involved in war itself and kept as much material as it could at home. In parallel and worse circumstances today Stalin would wish to cut his arms shipments to China.

A better way of relieving Japanese pressure on Russia —better than reinforcing Chinese resistance—would be for Moscow to try to direct Japanese expansion southward towards Siam and the Dutch East Indies. This would also serve Germany's interests. Even a great Japanese victory in China would not help Hitler soon in Europe. But the end of the Chinese war would help Hitler immediately by enabling Japan to concentrate on areas to the south of her where the United States and the British get vital war materials.

A Russo-Japanese agreement could envisage some kind of peace or truce or demilitarization near Siberia, and the end of the Chinese war. The Russians could end the Chinese war by encouraging the Chinese Communists to get a divorce from Chiang Kai-shek. Signs of trouble between the Communists and Chiang have multiplied of late. The Russians could take the Chinese Communists, in provinces contiguous with the Soviet Union, under their wing, and Japan would have an easier time with Chiang.

An agreement with Russia becomes all the more important to Tokio since the United States is helping Chiang. Help from America and Russia to Chiang might spell disaster to Japan. If Russia dropped Chiang, American help to China would not be effective.

An agreement between Russia and Japan is facilitated by any appearance of improvement in the relations between the United States and Russia. Fearing such an improvement, Japan will court Russia the more ardently. If Washington could get Russia to abandon Hitler, any American concession would be worth while. But Russia is at present too exposed and too much in doubt about the outcome of the war to be actively or openly anti-Hitler. Accordingly, America's friendlier attitude toward Moscow can only frighten the Japanese into coming to terms with Russia.

The lifting of the moral embargo is a feather in the cap of Constantine Oumansky, the Soviet ambassador in Washington, and that is probably why he urged it with such insistence. The State Department may have yielded to him on the purely legalistic ground that since Russia is no longer at war and no longer bombing civilians, the embargo imposed by the United States after the red air fleet bombed Finnish non-combatants ceases to be justified. But in the summer of 1939 the Russians used every concession and friendly gesture by London and Paris to sell themselves more dearly to Hitler. And the real objection to the recent steps toward a rapprochement between the United States and Moscow is that Stalin might easily use them to intimidate the Japanese into signing a pact which would channel Japanese aggression southward, undermine Chiang's position, and give the Russians a Communist zone of domination in China—partition of China *à la* Poland.

The release of a few million dollars worth of American machine tools or the lifting of the moral embargo will not alter or shape Moscow's attitude toward the war. Countries like Russia decide their course in this war by their estimate of its possible outcome. Stalin will remain tied to Hitler until Hitler appears to be losing. Then the fear which now inspires the Kremlin's policy will diminish and in its stead will come a greater freedom of action. At that time, America can play an active role in producing a shift in Mocow's allegiance. If, thanks to increased American aid, England looks as if it would be the victor, Stalin will have a change of heart. Until then, America's diplomatic overtures can only serve Japanese and German ends.

It is in no sense a matter of idealism versus realism, as Arthur Krock has suggested in the New York *Times*. No one expects idealism from foreign offices these days. The question is whether the realism will achieve or defeat its purpose.

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The Halifax Debut

BY I. F. STONE

Washington, February 1.

I AM sorry to have to fall back upon a much-abused phrase, but I am "reliably informed"—and that is just what I mean—that the State Department last Friday morning received a rather extraordinary cable from the British government. This cable said that the statements of Minister of Economic Warfare Hugh Dalton were not to be construed as criticism of the United States for lifting its "moral embargo" on the sale of planes to the Soviet Union. It also declared that since the unfortunate incident—for so it was described—conversations had taken place between representatives of the British and Russian governments and an understanding had been reached, an understanding presumably about American-Soviet trade.

I have no crystal ball in which to determine the cable's significance. However, it adds to the jigsaw puzzle of Anglo-American relations with Moscow. The "moral embargo" was lifted on January 21. Lord Halifax arrived on January 24. On the morning of January 28 he spent an hour with Sumner Welles, who has been in charge of the painfully slow and mutually suspicious negotiations looking toward better relations between this country and the Soviet Union. After this conference, Halifax told reporters that "a considerable amount of materials" was reaching the Reich via the Soviets, and informed them that the British were bringing pressure on the United States to stop the leak of essential war supplies, notably cotton, to the Nazis. Dalton made much the same statement in the Commons the same day, but he did not go quite so far as Halifax. He said there was little evidence that American supplies were reaching Germany directly, but "ample evidence" that the Soviets were exporting their own products and replacing them with imports from this country.

Hull at his press conference on January 28 explained apologetically that the lifting of the moral embargo was a psychological move designed merely to get rid of a point of irritation. He said cotton shipments to Russia were up only 125,000 bales last year.

The next day in London "a spokesman for the Ministry of Economic Warfare" took issue with Hull on the question of the cotton exports. Hull and Welles are already under fire from Catholic sources and from the Republicans in Congress for "appeasing" the Soviets. The cable arrived two days later.

The feeling in the State Department seems to be that this incident reflects differences between Eden, on the one hand, and Halifax and Dalton, on the other; that Halifax was instructed to check on possible leaks through Russia to Germany but was not instructed to do so in a way that would embarrass Hull and Welles in their Soviet negotiations. Two months ago, talking with a British correspondent, I was told there would be no improvement in Anglo-Soviet relations as long as Halifax was Foreign Secretary. I wonder whether he will play a similar role at the British Embassy in Washington.

Best news in a long time was the War Department's action in rejecting a Ford bid because he refused to accept a clause calling for compliance with the labor laws. Many factors went into the achievement of this victory. Credit goes first to Sidney Hillman, and his aides, for a long and vigorously waged fight. The new OPM setup also plays a part, for under it Hillman's division has a check on contracts that it did not have before. The publicity given the odd circumstances surrounding the "midget car" contract, brought to light in a *Nation* Washington letter on December 14, helped put pressure on the War Department. On the day the Ford bid was rejected, the War Department also withdrew its application to grant the canners exemption from the overtime requirements of the Walsh-Healey Act. Secretary of War Stimson, by these moves, has demonstrated his good faith. But it would be a serious mistake to believe that the fight has been won. The Department gives signs of taking fright at its own courage, and Undersecretary Patterson wobbled badly on Friday before the House Military Affairs Committee. The big-business crowd on the Defense Commission is determined to make the War Department reverse itself.

I suspect all this is not unconnected with an announcement which William Green will make tomorrow morning. He will say that "the production workers employed at the Lincoln Plant and the River Rouge plant of the Ford Motor Company have become organized into unions chartered by the American Federation of Labor." It looks as though Harry Bennett and Edsel Ford have finally won over "the old man" to their contention that the smart way to fight the C.I.O. organization drive is to play along with the A.F. of L. It is doubtful whether Green has been promised recognition for these, as yet, imaginary unions, but he has probably received stronger hints than he has in the past that Ford would look with

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favor on the A.F. of L. The fear that the War Department may be forced to continue its new labor policy, and concern over a possible investigation into influences favorable to Ford in the quartermaster corps, make it desirable to "change the subject" and give Ford's opposition to unionism the appearance of a jurisdictional dispute. This is especially important because of the growing demand for a Congressional investigation.

Congressman Charles I. Faddis, Democrat, of Pennsylvania, a member of the House Military Affairs Committee, promised ten days ago to introduce a resolution to investigate the "midget military car" contract given to Ford, but he now seems to be hesitating. Colonel Faddis has an intimate knowledge of military affairs.

The Nation, in an editorial on January 26, called attention to the fact that the weight specifications on this midget car, which the General Staff has tried to keep as light as possible, had been raised to a point that accorded with Ford's wishes. Only a Congressional committee could find out how this happened.

A Congressional committee would find a similar change in specifications for the new half-ton truck contract on which Ford's bid was finally rejected. I want to call attention to an unnoticed aspect of this contract. Last August the Fargo Manufacturing Company, a subsidiary of Chrysler, was awarded a contract for 14,000 of these half-ton trucks. Fargo was the low bidder, and the contract contained an option for 7,000 more. The War Department shortly afterward decided that it wanted an additional 11,000. It could have taken up the 7,000 option and ordered an additional 4,000 from Fargo and thus been certain of a standard type of truck. The task of repair and parts replacement behind the lines becomes a nightmare, when many different types are used. But instead of taking up the option, the War Department "in the light of experience in maneuvers, decided to change certain specifications of the truck to increase manufacturing sources of this item." (I am quoting from an earlier release by the War Department.) This statement is contradictory. It could mean that the change in specifications was made "in the light of experience in maneuvers" or that it was made "to increase manufacturing sources of this item"; that the change was made for military reasons or to let Ford in on the contract.

Mediterranean Scene

BY HARRY J. GREENWALL

Cap d'Antibes, France, January 15

AT NIGHT, when the entire French Mediterranean coast is blacked out, when every lighthouse, according to Italo-German orders, has its beams extinguished, British bombing planes hum over the seaboard country. Scattered along the coast, German and Italian agents spread fantastic stories of British bombings to come, bombings which the British who still live along this coast will be warned about in time to escape. These tales have a measure of success, because the French are only too willing to listen to any talk about British perfidy.

On the one occasion when Marseilles really was attacked, the German-controlled press in French unoccupied territory stated that British planes had bombed the city; that an energetic protest had been forwarded to London, via Washington, and that the Vichy government demanded apologies and reparations from Britain. The following day there appeared a statement that the French note had been sent through Madrid, not Washington, and that the fragments of the dropped bombs had been examined by experts who were certain that the bombs were of British make. That the bombs were British is true, but the report failed to state that they were British bombs that had been part of the booty captured during the German thrust to Dunkirk. In Marseilles it is whispered that these bombs were dropped from Italian planes. In any event nothing more has been heard of the Vichy demand for British apologies and reparations.

The prologue to this Mediterranean scene goes back to June 8, when the battle of the Alps began. It was the last battle between French and German forces, a campaign not yet fully recorded. I saw part of that battle, as an onlooker caught up in the fleeing masses of French soldiers and refugees. Finally on June 19 we came to rest at Valence, the headquarters of General Orly's army, a scratch force of some 25,000 men who stemmed the advance of German motorized divisions which had been moving at thirty-five miles a day.

The Stuttgart radio had announced that the German-Italian armies would "link hands in the center of France." I believed that Lyons was the chosen center, but according to definite information which came eventually into the hands of the French High Command, Chambéry, the capital city of the province of Savoy, was the place chosen for this merry meeting. The Germans were planning to march to Marseilles, believing that the French would not seek an armistice before the whole of France was in pawn to Germany and Italy.

The Italians? The Italians were to sweep into France, overrun the whole Alpes-Maritimes province and take

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the province of Savoy. It is possible that the Italians might have been able to carry out the major part of their program, but the last stand of General Orly's army (which consisted partly of sailors) drove a wedge between the Germans and Italians and threw the enemy war machine out of gear. The armistice came before the Germans could overcome the barrier General Orly provided. The General merits a niche in French history, alongside that of Marshal Joffre. I mean no offense to the bravery and *cran* of Orly's army when I write that it was not his men but his personal genius which stemmed the rising tide. General Orly had the brilliant idea of blowing up the huge dams which held back millions of tons of mountain waters, flooding the river Isère and making it impassable to the German troops. At this point I will leave the battle of the Alps, which, I suggest, formed the prologue to Mediterranean hostilities, and pass on to the first phase of the later battle.

In the early days of September the Italians in North Africa swung into action and thrust eastward, invading Egypt and gradually taking British Somaliland. The success was spectacular and good for home and foreign consumption; moreover, it was a grave threat to the security of the Suez Canal.

After the initial success of the Italians in September and early October, strange rumors flowed back across the Mediterranean. The Italian official version of the halt of operations was that a new and good road had to be built to carry stores, men, munitions, and gas for the tanks and lorries. Yet it was apparent that unless the Italians hastened on with their operations, the comparatively short dry season would end before the conquest of Egypt was accomplished. It was reported persistently that there had been a personal quarrel between Graziani and the Duce; the General was not prepared to cry *"Avanti"* to his men. Then came reports that Graziani was under "open arrest."

No real light was thrown on the situation until the attack on Greece. I happened to be in Italy directly after the seizure of Albania. I found displayed outside every bookshop maps of Albania showing the alleged riches —petrol, rice, and tobacco—the little country contained, although from my own observation I thought its riches could better be listed under the twin headings: scraggy mountains and goats. However, inside the bookshops there were offered for sale booklets which appeared to ignore the economic resources of Albania and to call more attention to the strategic and political advantages to be extracted from the possession of the country. A student of European affairs could not have failed to conclude that Albania was intended as a springboard for the eventual attack on either Yugoslavia or Greece.

An attack on Yugoslavia had two disadvantages. The country was, and is, more or less under the benevolent protection of Russia, and German economic penetration of Yugoslavia meant a "keep out" sign to Italy. Yet, Greece as a conquest token would be of no great value to Italy. Of no value, that is, unless Graziani had won his point: that he could not attack because, contrary to Italian intelligence service reports, the British had strongly reinforced their armies. Is it not possible that the attack on Greece was intended as a diversion, a sideshow staged to call troops and planes to the northern shores of the Mediterranean, leaving the British armies in North Africa weakened and easier to crush? If that is so two errors of judgment were committed. The Greeks themselves were able to meet and defeat an Italian army whose heart was not in the fight; and second, Britain could and did send assistance to Greece without endangering her situation in North and East Africa. Plans which had been rather slowly maturing for an attack on Graziani's men before the end of the dry season were hastened on. Risks were taken, as Mr. Churchill said in the House of Commons on December 19. Yet before the British took these risks, and won out, the Mediterranean battle had entered still another phase.

It has been suggested that Italy attacked Greece without the agreement of the Germans. This seems barely possible in the light of Germany's attempt to force Bulgaria into the war in order to strike at Greece on Italy's behalf. When the stage was set for this act Molotov went to Berlin. The *Neue Zürcher Nachrichten*, the best-informed European newspaper, gave the full story of that visit. In brief it was as follows:

Hitler wished to obtain Russia's consent to the partial occupation of Bulgaria, an attack on Greece, and war with Turkey if Turkey went to the assistance of its Greek ally. Hitler, it seems, pointed out to Stalin's envoy how he had smoothed the path which Russia of the Soviets trod in the footsteps of old imperialistic Russia: the path to Finland, the reconquest of Esthonia, Lithuania, and Latvia; how German engineers had built the very roads for the Russian forces which retook Bessarabia. Molotov, it is reported, agreed with everything, but then went on to state that Soviet Russia intended to follow further the foreign policy of the Tsars, that Russia preserved its interests in the Slav people of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. And moreover, so far as Moscow was concerned, the policy was still "hands off the Straits." Soviet Russia means to keep its entry from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea wide open. This frank statement of policy, said the Swiss journal, was the first setback to Axis policy.

We are now obviously rapidly approaching the fourth phase of the Mediterranean war, and the permanent question now is: how much will Germany help Italy?

The possibilities, as an observer sees the situation here, are these: Germany without in any way violating the armistice agreement with France could pass its

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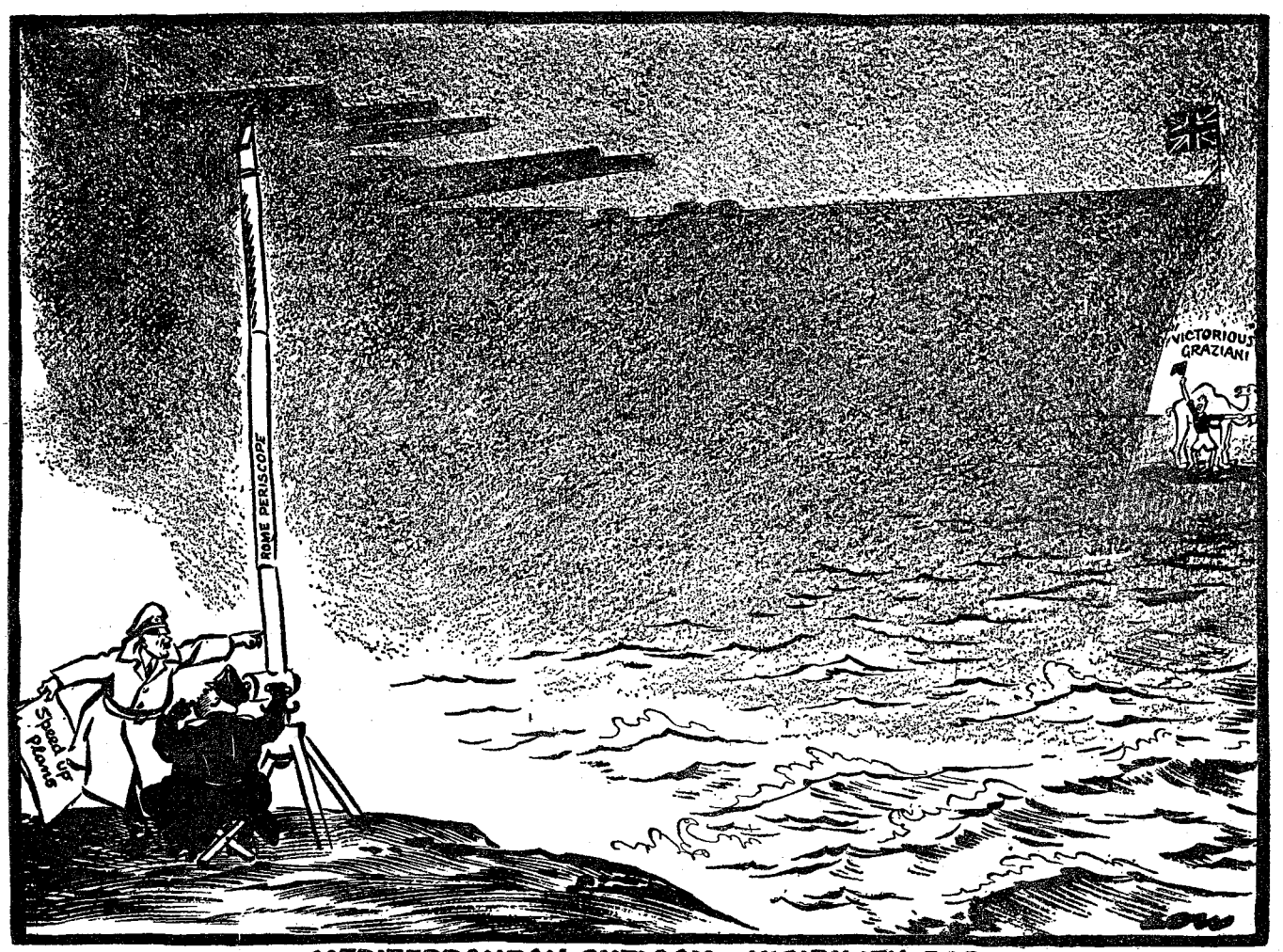
troops into Spain, try and capture Gibraltar, and with the assistance of Spain close the western end of the Mediterranean. Spain has, despite British protests, laid heavy hands on Tangiers and thus holds one of the Pillars of Hercules, of which Gibraltar forms the second. But the control of the western end of the Middle Sea would not hamper to any considerable extent British operations in the eastern section. British sea power is still able to convoy ships bringing supplies round to East Africa via the Cape of Good Hope.

Germany could and, if she wanted, would violate the armistice with France and invade unoccupied territory, seizing the ports of Toulon and Marseilles. But would that help Italy very much? My own opinion is that before very long we shall see Germany occupying Trieste and the whole of the former Austrian territory which passed into the hands of Italy following the signing of the treaty of St. Germain. Germany has long since cast sheep's eyes on the fat lands of Lombardy, whose plains are even now but a stone's throw from her Austrian frontier. The seizure of Trieste would immediately make Germany a Mediterranean power. Maybe this would not be of any great assistance to Italy, but it would be one more successful circus for Hitler to present to Germany.

It is perhaps permissible to carry these premises still further. An early occupation of northern Italy would shut and possibly bolt the back door to Germany through northern Italy into Bavaria, should Britain and its Allies decide, after the defeat of the Italian troops in Africa, to carry the Mediterranean war into Italian metropolitan territory by landing troops at various points along the 4,000 miles of Italian coastline.

One can easily delve a little further into the not very distant future. The fact that French mobile guards have been mobilized on the new Franco-Italian frontier to push back the hundreds of civilians who want to cross over into France is a living proof that all is not so well in the heart of Mussolini's Roman Empire. Italian trains are being taken off by the score, because the supply of German coal is falling off. American newspapermen coming from Italy report stories of strong criticism of highly placed officials. It is not a matter of indulging in wishful thinking. One must visualize the moment when Germany will cast away the mask and set about making its ally of today the vassal of tomorrow. This might well come about, if and when the army revolts against the regime—and Germany, already installed in the North, marches south, just to keep order, of course.



MEDITERRANEAN OUTLOOK—VISIBILITY BAD

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Caveat Investor

BY KENNETH MACNEAL

SHORTLY after the turn of each year thousands of American corporations mail out millions upon millions of neat little booklets to their stockholders. If you are a stockholder you will receive one from each corporation on whose stock list your name appears, whether you own one share or ten thousand.

These booklets all bear on their covers the inscription: Annual Report, Financial Report, Annual Statement, or some similar name. Each looks as though its purpose were to tell you how much profit your company made during the past year and how much wealth it possessed at the end of the year. If you believe that it will do this you are a perfectly normal stockholder and you are also, if you back your belief with money, perfectly ripe for the cleaners. For only rarely will a report supply this information, even approximately, and if it does it will be by accident rather than by design.

Suppose, for illustration, that you have recently purchased some stock on the advice of your banker, but you have since had some misgivings because you cannot afford to lose your money, and you have heard that even bankers sometimes make mistakes in recommending investments. One day in February you receive through the mail a booklet called "Annual Report of the Candid Company." It contains a letter from the president and several pages of financial statements. It occurs to you that this is your chance to learn for yourself what kind of investment you have made. So that evening, after dinner, you sit down in your favorite chair with a determination to read and understand the report even if it kills your whole evening.

First you read the list of officers and directors named on the inside of the cover. You are pleased to find some well-known names among the directors. But it is likely that you would be much more impressed if you realized that this page stands an excellent chance of being the only one in the entire booklet that actually means what it appears to say.

Next you read the president's letter, which starts with the words: "To Our Stockholders." This letter states that a balance sheet and an earnings statement for the year ended December 31, 1940, are being submitted herewith, and that the net earnings for the year amounted to a certain sum. It then asserts that the company's current assets are so many times its current liabilities. Finally, after some general remarks about the amount of business done, it winds up by thanking all the company's employees for their loyal cooperation during the year. You will do well to withhold judgment on the remarks about the earnings and the current assets. The president may believe these but, as will shortly become apparent, the odds are against either being true.

Following the president's letter is a financial statement occupying a double page, with the caption, "Balance Sheet, December 31, 1940," at its top. Below this caption the left-hand page is headed "Assets," and the right-hand page "Liabilities and Net Worth." Do not conclude from the date at the top that the figures in the balance sheet are meant to inform you of the value of the assets and net worth of your company on December 31, 1940, because if you do you will have fallen into a trap that has snared thousands. Some of the figures relate to that date, it is true, but others state only historical costs incurred at a variety of dates in the near or distant past, and still others are, well—just figures.

You can confirm this by examining the assets, which start with a group of items called "Current Assets." This group comprises assets whose function is to supply money in time of need, or to be converted into money in the ordinary and usual course of business operations. The first asset in the group is "Cash." This is the real McCoy. It represents actual cash on hand or in the bank at the close of business December 31, 1940. After cash come "Accounts Receivable" and "Notes Receivable." These also mean just what they say. They represent the total face value of the accounts and notes owed to the company by its customers on December 31, 1940, less an allowance for any that may ultimately prove uncollectible. So far so good.

The next asset is "Inventories," and the sum at which they are stated may or may not represent the value of the merchandise and material owned by your company on December 31, 1940. If the market value of the inventories is less than what they cost, this market value will usually, but not always, be shown. If, on the other hand, the market value of the inventories is more than what they cost, then only their cost will be shown. In other words, if your company's inventory includes ten million pounds of copper purchased at 6 cents per pound, and the present price of this copper is 12 cents per pound, it will be included in the inventory as an asset worth only $600,000, even though it be instantly salable for $1,200,000. In this case your company will have a concealed profit of $600,000 which will appear neither

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on its balance sheet nor in its earnings statement. Since inventories are current assets, and usually the most valuable current assets, you can see that your president's statement about current assets being so many times current liabilities may frequently be something less than the truth. If you are waiting for an opportunity to sell your stock at a fair price, the concealment of profits in this manner may have an important bearing on your financial welfare.

The last item in the current asset group is "Marketable Securities." These are securities with a ready market which may be sold at any time without injury to the business. They do not include investments in subsidiaries, or any investment whose sale would rule out working relationships with other businesses. Like inventories, if their market value is less than their cost, they will usually, but not always, be shown at the former figure. If, however, their market value is more than their cost, they will be exhibited at cost, with their market value appearing only in parentheses as a sort of obiter dictum. In this case a profit will again exist which will not appear in the earnings statement, and your president's statement about the ratio of current assets to current liabilities will again be in error. If your company's holdings of marketable securities are large, it is possible that many millions of dollars of profits may have been obscured in this manner.

Following the current assets is a group of large items known as "Fixed Assets." These consist of "Land," "Buildings," "Machinery," and in general those assets which are presumably never to be sold because their possession is essential to the operation of the business. With few exceptions they are always valued at cost, less an allowance for depreciation in the case of such assets as buildings and machinery, which deteriorate with use or the passage of time. The actual value of these assets may be many millions more or less than shown but you will never learn about it from your company's financial report. If the value is greatly less than shown, it may have long been obvious to insiders that your company will be unable to refund its first mortgage bonds, and that it is headed for bankruptcy. The first intimation you will receive of this, however, will be from newspapers which announce the bankruptcy. On the other hand, if the value is greatly more than shown, you may be deprived of enormous profits that are rightfully yours.

Consider, for example, the case of one corporation which for years owned and occupied a plant covering a number of acres in a large city. As time went by, the city grew and the value of the plant increased enormously. No mention of this increase was made in the reports of the corporation, and consequently most stockholders remained in complete ignorance of the value of their company's property. Speculators accumulated a portion of the company's stock in the open market and, as the price rose, many small stockholders sold their holdings because the certified published statements of the corporation showed that from neither the standpoint of assets nor earnings was the stock worth so much. However, the stock continued to rise and eventually the corporation moved into the country, selling its old plant at a profit of several million dollars. This was sufficient to pay the large funded debt and to place the corporation in a different financial category altogether. The point is that stockholders of the corporation were, in effect, deprived of profits that their company had been accumulating over many years, because they were kept in ignorance of these profits and were not supplied with facts necessary for the formation of a rational estimate of the value of their stock.

Following "Fixed Assets" on your company's balance sheet come a number of items under the caption, "Deferred Charges." The assets grouped under this heading comprise, on the one hand, a number of prepaid expenses such as "Prepaid Insurance" and "Prepaid Taxes." The unexpired portions of these prepaid expenses are real assets, because they represent legal claims for services or protection that have been paid for but have not yet been received. Other items grouped under this heading, however, may comprise expenses that are not assets at all because they represent nothing material that can be used nor do they represent a legal claim on anybody for anything. They may consist of legal fees, stock-salesmen's commissions, advertising expenses, discount on bonds sold, and, in some cases, even the early operating losses of the business. As assets they are nonsense. They are really expenses or losses that the management of your company does not yet wish to acknowledge as such by exhibiting them as expenses in its earnings statement. To the extent that they exist your company's reported earnings have been exaggerated.

The next asset is "Patents." It is probably the most difficult item of all to value correctly because nobody knows its true value. In actual practice it may be valued at almost any figure deemed expedient by the management. Sometimes it is called "Patents and Good Will" and appears at a huge valuation. On the other hand, the General Electric Company values all of its priceless patents at the total sum of one dollar. You will have to do some tall guessing on this one. Bear in mind, however, that if it is overvalued or undervalued then the reported profits of your company have been overstated or understated by the same amounts.

Finally you come to the last asset of all—"Good will." This is the prize phony of the lot. Theoretically it is supposed to represent the value of the established popularity of a business, but usually it represents the exact reverse of this. Companies whose large earnings prove that they possess it in abundant quantities scorn to display it. Other companies, whose earnings are such as to

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entitle them to claim no good will whatever, display it in profuse amounts, only to write it off if later good fortune grants them a real claim to it. Recognizing this, many sound companies display good will prominently in their balance sheets opposite a valuation of one dollar, to indicate that they possess it and that they therefore do not intend to exhibit it as an asset. Under these circumstances good will has become meaningless. No intelligent method is used to value or to revalue it from time to time, and accountants will sanction its reduction or total elimination at any time. Frequently it is combined with patents in an effort to conceal its amount. On the whole you will act wisely if you regard it, not as an asset, but as a concealed loss.

So much for the assets. You have scrutinized them all. The total at the bottom of the page seems to indicate that they are worth so much money. Now it is up to you to decide what they are really worth. By looking at the "Liabilities" section of the balance sheet, you can see that trade creditors, employees, the government, bondholders, and others, have a claim on these assets for various amounts. By looking at the "Net Worth" section, you can also see that the stockholders have a claim on them for everything that is left over. The earnings statement, which follows the balance sheet, merely shows the amount by which the stockholders' claim has increased or decreased during the past year.

But do not forget that if the value of the assets is incorrectly shown, the amount of the stockholders' claim will be incorrectly shown, and that therefore the amount of the earnings to date will have been incorrectly shown. Furthermore, remember that although you may be morally certain that the assets are incorrectly valued, you still do not know their correct value. You may be more suspicious, but you are no wiser than before. Perhaps your company has made twice as much as it says it has. Perhaps it has lost twice as much as it says it has earned. It's your guess, and you will not be aided by relying on the accountant's certificate following your company's balance sheet and earnings statement, which assures you that these "fairly present the position of the company at December 31, 1940, and the results of its operations for the year ending at that date."

Finally, however, if like many others you perceive the futility of pitting your guesses against the knowledge of insiders who know, don't you think it is time that you cast your vote in favor of a change in our system of financial reporting?

What War Has Done to Japan

BY BARBARA PAINE

THE Japanese standard of living has undergone some startling modifications since 1935. The per capita income, although still very low by American standards, has nearly doubled, but ordinary commodities have become so scarce, so expensive, and so cheapened in quality that the standard of living has fallen sharply. Today farmers are the only people in Japan not suffering from shortages. They raise their own food, make their own charcoal, are the only group allowed by law to eat 100 per cent polished rice, and never spend much money anyway on store-bought objects. Farmers can get rubber-soled *tabi* or split-toed shoes when city workers can't. But the middle classes are gradually becoming impoverished. Before the war in China the majority of pawnshop patrons were day laborers; today that distinction is held by white-collar workers. While laborers are said to use the pawnshops now only when collecting money for a spree, the small-salaried men are driven to pawning their staple fiber clothes in order to obtain rice for their families. Wage levels are unbelievably low. A rookie policeman, for example, receives 30 yen, or $7.50, a month, plus a uniform and a sword. Salesgirls and waitresses get about the same amount, domestic servants somewhat less, school teachers start at $15 a month, factory workers and miners get $20 a month, and government employees average $25 a month. Nevertheless, there are compensating factors which in normal times prevent mass suffering.

The Japanese diet, while it would horrify an American dietitian, is extremely cheap and moderately healthy. (On their part the Japanese not only dislike our food but consider it very indigestible.) Domestic architecture in Japan is well adapted to housing large families in a few rooms and still giving scope for a certain natural elegance and refinement. The literacy rate is quite high in spite of the difficulties of the written language.

Most workers either receive the benefit of, or actually possess, sources of income not mentioned in bare statistics. At New Year's and in July workers receive a bonus equal to from one to six months' total salary or even more. The bonuses of workers in key industries such as the munitions factories, in many big firms such as the Mitsubishi Company, and among various classes of small salaried workers are equal to at least their total year's wages. Besides this, most large firms provide retirement and pension allowances for their employees, extra for

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overtime, and for medical treatment and hospitalization. Moreover, the family system is powerful in Japan, and it is a rather unusual family that must depend on the earnings of one individual.

The average Japanese petty official with three dependents spends $7 a month on food, $4 on housing, $1 on light and heat, $2 on clothing, $7 on education, personal gifts, amusements, and other incidentals, and whatever remains on insurance, government bonds, and interest on debts. The bonuses are arranged so that poor families, with their supposedly feebler capacity for planning, can twice a year pay off debts and make big purchases such as winter clothing.

These low-salaried men and their families live in two- or three-room houses; eat rice and tea, and some fish, pickles, and fruit; take baths three or four times a week in the public bath house for half a cent a person, wear their clothes threadbare; and perhaps can manage to send their most promising sons through a higher school. The head of the family smokes Golden Bat cigarettes costing two cents for a package of ten, reads a one-cent newspaper, and can travel ten miles daily by train for less than a dollar. More likely than not he has a few debts.

In normal times this life, stringent though it is, is not too hard, but it has been badly dislocated by the war. Taxes have soared. A flat 6 per cent income tax is now paid on incomes over $180 a year with surtaxes beginning at 10 per cent for incomes over $2,000 and increasing to 85 per cent for incomes over $200,000. An enterprising newspaper figured out that this year every man, woman, and child in Japan will pay nearly $2 a month in taxes, some direct but most indirect.

The pressure to save and buy government bonds is unceasing. New Year's bonuses for 1940 were supposed to be paid in government bonds, and over 500,000 soldiers and civilians who distinguished themselves in China were awarded bonuses of bonds which they were not supposed to cash. Billboards on every street corner and in every street car announce postal savings bonds which can be bought for fifty cents. To make enforced savings palatable, lottery bonds have been introduced. This year the government hopes to raise twelve billion yen in bonds, 120 yen or $30 for every individual in Japan. A high official of the finance ministry said, "I realize that it will be extremely difficult for minor officials, low-salaried men, and wage-earners to have 120 yen each, but the people must grin and bear it for the fulfillment of the lofty ideal for which the country is fighting."

After the typical Japanese citizen has paid his new and burdensome taxes and contributed his share toward the absorption of every new bond issue, he still has to face the most disagreeable effect of the holy war—rising prices. Since the "China incident" started in 1937, wages have increased by 28 per cent and the price of commodities by over 40 per cent. Increasingly serious shortages and shabby and cheapened substitutes make this situation more serious every month.

The Japanese have few needs, so they become doubly alarmed when their necessities are threatened. Among foods, for example, fish became so scarce and expensive last winter that it practically disappeared from middle-class tables. In May, 1940, fruit and vegetables cost 11 per cent more than in March and 114 per cent more than before "the incident." Worst of all, Japanese rice is so adulterated with imported rice and barley that about half the population is complaining bitterly of indigestion. Those who are not satisfied by the new rice are being advised by the government to drink more water just before meals.

Next to food in importance is an adequate supply of charcoal, coal bricks, and other fuels. Last winter every form of heating except wood was affected by serious shortages. Where the Japanese felt the lack of fuel most deeply was not in their homes but in the public baths, thousands of which closed down entirely while others lowered the temperature of the water so that their patrons found themselves deprived of their last resources for getting warm.

Among other commodities it is impossible to buy a spool of cotton or a ball of wool in Japan. The current textile is *sufu,* a very cheap and flimsy staple fiber which has only 5 per cent the strength of cotton and which disintegrates completely after its second washing. Half a dozen would-be suicides who have tried to hang themselves with staple fiber rope failed because the rope snapped. *Sufu* is bad for babies, and six yards of cotton are rationed to the mothers of new-born infants upon presentation of their birth certificates, but the rest of Japan suffers greatly from lack of cotton.

The tale of Japanese shortages is endless. There is so acute a lack of drugs that major operations are performed without ether. The nail shortage is such that sneak thieves steal nails at night from fences. Flints are used again in kitchens because of the match shortage, and shoes are no longer resoled but merely patched because of the leather shortage.

The inferiority of commodities has diverted considerable income to the amusement business. Amusement taxes for 1939 were 56 per cent higher than estimated. In Tokyo alone over 78,000 women are now engaged directly in the amusement business; many big movie theaters sold the house out four times daily in 1939; and there are 220 cafés and bars in one small district of the city. Purchasing power where entertainment is concerned shows no signs of abating.

Industrial workers, in spite of the increasing demand for their services, are not to be envied. Hours

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are so long, and many of the workers so young and inexperienced, that the accident rate is very high and constantly increasing—last year 30 per cent of all factory workers were reported as injured, disabled, or killed. Eleven-hour working days are still the rule, but the possibility of shortening them is being discussed and factories which put undue pressure on their workers are kept under police surveillance. There are many new laws for the protection of women and minors employed in factories, and police give frequent instruction in accident prevention.

Since rising prices constantly threaten the feeble security of the industrial classes, it is expected that eventually both wages and prices will be frozen by government decree. The first attempt at such stabilization in September, 1939, was a total failure, but the next will be more successful. As a temporary palliative the Welfare Ministry decided in May to boost the wages of workers in heavy industries by 40 to 60 per cent of the increasingly high cost of living. To laborers of low earning capacity with children under fourteen the government gives a special allowance of from fifty cents to a dollar a month. The Welfare Ministry has also subsidized the erection of 5,000 new houses and apartments this year to ease the housing scarcity, and compulsory schooling is going to be gradually increased from six to eight years, partly as a health measure to protect children who would otherwise go to work.

Among measures designed to help the hard-pressed white-collar workers there is one providing for the founding of several new government loan companies from which they may at least borrow money at a fair rate of interest. Within the last year, too, the government has extended its gigantic pension and health insurance system to about half a million very minor officials who were reported to be affected by rising discontent. School teachers have been granted a five-yen ($1.25) monthly increase in salary. According to the Japanese sense of responsibility, those in superior positions have very pronounced obligations toward their underlings. At periods of stress like the present all the virtues of this system become especially apparent. For instance, most large firms maintain lunchrooms for their employees. The food is exactly the same for everyone, but prices are graduated according to ability to pay. Important officials by paying $2 for their meal absorb most of the rise in prices and make it possible for lowly clerks to get a good meal for three cents.

The worst effect of the lowered standard of living in Japan has been the decline in national health. The infant mortality rate has risen; the birth rate has fallen, mainly, the Japanese think, because of over-employment of married women in factories and lack of money in the low-salaried groups. Young children aren't up to previous standards in height and weight. Office workers require more and more sick leave. The amount of tuberculosis has increased by 50 per cent within the last three years, and the disease is so prevalent that one school child in seven in Tokyo is in immediate need of treatment.

The government is trying to cope with health problems by building hundreds of new hospitals and putting emphasis on gymnastics in primary schools; by establishing country health clinics and marriage relations bureaus, and free lunch kitchens for undernourished children, and by regulating the employment of pregnant women. Last year the government built six new tuberculosis sanitariums for urban children, and the army is planning to establish twenty-five, each to accommodate five hundred patients and intended solely for soldiers suffering from relapses.

It is obvious to anyone living in Japan, and to the Japanese themselves, that the standard of living will continue to fall until the war in China is settled. There is little serious suffering, and what there is, is mainly confined to the small-salaried men. In general the rest of the nation is superficially satisfied, but how much further it can see its meager standards reduced is something that must keep its leaders awake at night.

WPA Is Defense

BY FRANK RYHLICK

Washington, January 30

ONCE again the Work Projects Administration is facing its annual fight for life. And this time most of the cards in the deck are stacked against it. The tory junta in Congress is hopeful that before the end of the session the agency will be reduced to little more than a paper organization. This prospect brings a pleased smile to the lips of Messrs. Cox, Woodrum, and Co., who look at the defense program through the small end of a mental telescope and see a vast arsenal of guns and battleships constructed at the expense of human needs and liberties. But it is a matter of grave concern to those in the Capital who believe that under many circumstances a WPA project may prove more important to the defense of democracy than a flying fortress.

Already forming are the economic and political battle lines along which the WPA's future under the defense program will be decided. The complexities of the situation are many, not the least of them being such imponderables as the role the United States may play in the war a year from now.

President Roosevelt fired the opening salvo in his budget message with the announcement of a $400,000,000 cut in WPA funds for the 1941-42 fiscal year and the disclosure that he would seek a deficiency appropriation of about the same amount to finance work relief for

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the balance of the current fiscal year. He asserted that employment expectations more than justify the proposed reduction.

Congressional conservatives promptly replied by attacking the President for not cutting next year's appropriation enough and for requesting too much for this year's deficiency. They proposed to slash the requested deficiency by at least one-half and the appropriation for next year by a minimum of two-thirds. Their rationalization was avidly expressed by the Washington *Post* in an editorial holding that "with the prospect that the defense program will create millions of jobs in the next two years, we might well reduce the WPA to a skeleton and shift the remaining public relief problem to the states where it belongs." There is more than a chance that something along this line will be done, for the powerful Southern bloc has bedded down with the New Deal only to the extent of supporting its foreign policy and will always coalesce with the Republicans on social issues.

A third position is held by Acting WPA Administrator Howard Hunter. He contends that reemployment during the next fiscal year will make only a small dent in work relief rolls and not even tap the huge waiting list of certified and uncertified eligibles.

Here are the available facts:

President Roosevelt asked that $995,000,000 of his $17,500,000,000 budget be appropriated to WPA for the next fiscal year. It was the first time he had attempted to estimate WPA needs for a full year ahead. WPA received $975,000,000 for the current fiscal year, with the proviso that it could be spent in eight months if necessary. Most of the money will be gone by the end of February. Of the amount requested for next year, about $20,000,000 must be earmarked for miscellaneous obligations, leaving about $975,000,000 for work relief. The effect of spreading this sum over an entire fiscal year would be a cut of $400,000,000.

At his annual budget "seminar" for reporters, the President claimed that the list of those waiting to get on WPA had dropped from nearly 1,000,000 to less than 500,000 in the past six months, and predicted that his budget estimate would care for all unemployed except those who couldn't hold a job anyway. "It will not be necessary," he added, "to use this full amount if the defense program should result in more general employment than is presently indicated."

As of January 8, there were 1,886,824 persons employed by WPA. At the present cost of $64.50 per month per person, including wages, materials, and administrative expenses, an average of 1,300,000 could be employed in the next fiscal year, about 500,000 less than this year's average. However, Acting Administrator Hunter predicts that the monthly cost per man will rise to $70 and possibly $80 because WPA plans to put increasing emphasis on strictly defense projects, such as airports and military roads, on which more must be spent for materials. In other words, between 500,000 and 800,000 workers will have to be pruned from the rolls under the contemplated budget.

Hunter disagrees with the President's statement that the waiting list has been reduced to less than 500,000. He produces WPA records to show there are about 600,000 on waiting lists in states which certify all applicants. He estimates there are nearly 400,000 more in states which do not formally certify applicants until there is a place for them on the rolls.

Various government and private economists have predicted that anywhere from 2,000,000 to 5,000,000 new jobs will be created by the defense program during the coming year. The largest annual increase of the World War era was 2,700,000, but there are so many new factors involved that this figure is of doubtful value now, even as a guide. Hunter says WPA economists anticipate an employment gain of 2,000,000, with approximately 400,000 coming from WPA.

Thus, according to Hunter's figures, WPA rolls would have to be cut at least 500,000 under the new budget, while only 400,000 would be absorbed by private industry. This, presumably, would add another 100,000 to the waiting list, which Hunter says is already close to 1,000,000. Allowing for the general gain in employment, however, WPA would continue to aid about 24 per cent of the unemployed. As one of the liberals in the House observed dryly, 24 per cent from 100 left 76 per cent when he went to school. As this calculation in higher mathematics undoubtedly still holds true, it leaves too many people on various state and federal direct relief programs or without known means of livelihood at an hour when democracy is facing its greatest challenge.

The Federal Security Agency report for January 18 indicated that reemployment had not kept pace with seasonal declines during November. It showed that total federal payments for public assistance and for earnings of persons employed under federal work programs amounted to $281,176,000 for that month, an increase of about 3.4 per cent over the October total of $272,006,000 and a similar increase over November, 1939.

At least as much weight must be given to official WPA statistics as to any others. But if all these figures prove anything, they prove the folly of leaving the problem of unemployment to estimates, predictions, arithmetic, and other such forms of economic crystal-gazing. The mere fact that two such experts on WPA as the President and Mr. Hunter disagree should be a warning of the danger in a small and inflexible appropriation. A small bloc of progressives in Congress has advanced informally the suggestion that enough money be appropriated to take care of the maximum number of unemployed, and that this be spent on a month-to-month

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basis of actual need. But this will remain little more than a suggestion, unless the Administration and labor are willing to fight.

"Total defense," said President Roosevelt in his budget message, "means more than weapons. It means people of health and stamina, conscious of their democratic rights and responsibilities."

WPA can play an important part in translating the President's words into a program for human defense. It can also contribute to the material defense of the nation, as the record discloses. More than $157,000,000 of WPA funds were earmarked for national defense projects during the first six months of this fiscal year; a total of 772 defense projects was approved. On January 9 over 400,000 workers were assigned to these projects. "For the past five years," Hunter declares, "the WPA has been the nation's front line defense against unemployment. Now it becomes one of the most important forces in the second-line trenches of the nation's defense of democracy. And General George Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, declared recently that "in the great task of preparing for national defense, the WPA has proved itself to be an invaluable aid."

In the Wind

THE *Daily Worker* has been giving Jan Valtin, author of the best-seller "Out of the Night," the Shmelka Ginsberg treatment accorded General Krivitsky two years ago. Valtin, says the Communist organ, is either an invention of Eugene Lyons and Isaac Don Levine or a character out of the German underworld. What the editors have not said, and may not know, is that their paper published Valtin's picture some years ago.

DOROTHY THOMPSON, whose sensational shift to Roosevelt during the Presidential campaign irked the New York *Herald Tribune,* will soon move her column over to the liberal New York *Post.*

IN A RECENT listing of draftees in the New York *World-Telegram,* only Nelson Rockefeller was dignified with a "Mr." before his name.

SOME HOLLYWOOD musicians, who hoped to escape draft duty, joined a California marine band. Recently the band was ordered to the Philippines for active service with the marine corps stationed in the islands.

GOVERNOR COOPER of Tennessee was asked by a Scripps-Howard reporter in Knoxville if he approved of teachers joining unions. "I think they should be patriotic and not do so," replied the Governor.

NEW YORK State Senator Charles Muzzicato won in the last elections as a regular Republican and also as the candidate of the left wing of the American Labor Party, which means that he received active Communist support. To celebrate his victory a party was given by Carmelo Amoruso, who is associated with the openly fascist *Il Grido della Stirpe.* Among the more distinguished guests was Gaetano Vecchiotti, Italian consul general in New York.

THE MAYOR of Cambridge, Mass., recently discovered he had no funds for snow removal. He therefore suggested that the townspeople petition God to remove the snow. "The Almighty sends snow," he said, "and, if we have patience enough, He will remove it. He always has." The Mayor also ordered that, when snow threatens, factory whistles are to blow to summon the people to prayer.

AN ENGLISH schoolteacher asked her students who wrote the poem beginning, "Oh, to be in England. . . ." No one answered for a time, but a young Cockney finally broke the silence with " 'Itler."

WALLACE DEUEL'S ADDRESS on the war situation to the Council on Foreign Relations was reported by a Chicago daily in a brief story that appeared on the society page. One inch was devoted to an account of the speech. Four-and-a-quarter inches were given to a description of the hats of the ladies in the audience, one of which was "a confection of pink flowers and wings."

NEWEST STUNT in the drive to organize Ford is the use of a 1914 "tin lizzie." C. I. O. leaders are driving it through the city of Detroit with placarded suggestions that Ford's labor policy is a couple of decades behind the times.

THE GUARDIANS of political morals who are investigating the socially progressive Rugg textbooks may be interested in these quotations from Fairchild, Furniss, and Buck, the standard economics text at many large colleges, including Yale: ". . . the efficiency of labor is dependent on three factors—race and inheritance, health and energy, training and social environment. . . . A high degree of intelligence, the ability to learn, the ability to persevere are the recognized characteristics of certain races. Inability to receive more than a small amount of instruction or to grasp abstract ideas, fickleness of purpose, and lack of the power of concentration are found in certain other races. . . . Self-interest is the spur which drives the private business man to make his business efficient. To the public official this motive is weak or absent."

IN HIS ARTICLE, Passports to Nowhere, in last week's *Nation,* Joachim Joesten told of his thirty fellow-refugees on the Japanese liner Ginyo Maru who might, for lack of valid visas, be carried back to Japan and "finally arrive 'home' [Germany] after five months' useless traveling." The American Joint Distribution Committee reports that through its intervention twenty-one of the passengers have been given temporary asylum in Ecuador and none will be returned to Japan.

[*We invite our readers to submit material for In the Wind —either clippings with source and date or stories that can be clearly authenticated. A prize of $5 will be awarded each month for the best item.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

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A Native at Large

BY JONATHAN DANIELS

Lynching without Bloodshed

NEGROES have obtained jobs in the defense program. Many who have obtained jobs needed them badly in a South in which neither tobacco nor cotton has felt the effects of the boom. One of the stories told for laughter in a crowded military boom town is of a group of Negroes commuting in a second-hand hearse. But while defense has invented no new racial discriminations, it has given the most dramatic demonstration of the disappearance of the Negro skilled craftsman in the South—and beyond the South as well.

There is bitterness—and natural bitterness—among Negro leaders against the scarcely concealed Jim Crow lines in the army and navy. Thoughtful white men in the North and South have spoken sharply about the dangers to democracy in a policy in defense industries which shuts the door in the face of Negro workmen. The unfortunate fact seems to be that such protests come too late. In an America which has been assuring the Negro of more legal rights, in a South which has been growing less and less violent and even, though slowly, more and more equitable in its educational and other public services, the one right of the Negro which has been steadily destroyed has been the basic right to earn a living by the use of his skill. National defense projects are not so much taking that right away from him as they are demonstrating how far that process has already gone.

Every friend of the Negro knows that such a condition is not limited to the South. If it were, there would be no sense or reason in the protests of Lieutenant Governor Charles Poletti as coordinator of the New York State Council of Defense. But in the South it is most striking and most serious. I take as example one Southern state, my own North Carolina. It has been rather proud of itself in matters of race relations, in the justice of its dealings with the Negro third of its people. It has had in its history fewer lynchings than any other state in the South. But in North Carolina something significant is shown in the big body of workers mobilized to build two army camps. In the total number of men given jobs the Negroes have received their proportionate share on a population basis. But among the skilled workers in a state in which nearly a third of the people are colored, only one job in twenty has gone to a Negro.

Is that discrimination in defense? I don't think so—at least it is not merely a discrimination born of the emergency. I wish it were, because then there would be a better and quicker chance of doing something about it. It represents rather, I think, the long process by which not in a crisis but across the years the old-time Negro craftsmen have been decreasing in number and younger Negroes have been barred from the trades. In all the years during which the number of Negro doctors and lawyers, teachers and dentists, has been growing in a segregated all-Negro world, the essential middle class of skilled men has been disappearing. This leaves the race empty of strength in the skills between the bottom and the top. A Negro must be a leader or a laborer. There is hardly a chance for him between the two categories.

More serious than any present discrimination against the Negro is, I think, the showing that the rights of a minority may be effectually denied in a democracy in the very years in which they seem to be growing. They are establishing a graduate school at the North Carolina College for Negroes now. It is needed. But it makes me mad that a Negro may be a Ph.D. but has increasingly less chance to be a plumber. He may be a lawyer with a great deal more ease than he can be an electrician. I am for equal pay for Negro teachers but more concerned about the discrimination which is destroying the Negro barber.

The Negro undoubtedly has special legal rights in the defense program. The country is spending the money, and the Negro is the particular citizen whose rights as citizen the Constitution was amended to protect. Treatment of the Negro in the mobilization of American powers for defense of democracy obviously tests the honesty or the hypocrisy of the democracy we defend. But the discrimination in employment is deeper and sadder than anything involved in legal rights. The skilled Negro laborer whose crafts were a pride of the plantations under slavery, whose work was known and approved in the early years of his freedom in the South, has been all but destroyed. In quietness, often with the aid of craft labor unions, the skilled Negro worker has been lynched. And the body can be found North and South now in long lines of Negroes seeking relief. So far as Negro skill is concerned, what we face now is not discrimination in defense but a murder which has already taken place under democracy.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

Notes by the Way

IN THE weeks since the death of Scott Fitzgerald I have read or reread each of the nine books he published. It has been on the whole a depressing experience—partly because one must agree with the glib epitaph assigned to him in the newspaper obituaries: a man of talent who did not fulfil his early promise; and partly for other reasons. To reread Fitzgerald's early books is to be plunged back into the attitudes and ferment of the early twenties; and to feel a little duped. For one is brought up sharply against the fact that in the perspective of 1941, the "disillusion" of the twenties, on which we wasted so much gin and eloquence, seems poignantly youthful, romantic, affirmative—allied with the age of innocence which preceded it rather than with the age of guilt which it prefigured. The gusto with which "This Side of Paradise" and "The Beautiful and Damned" were written was certainly affirmative, though the theme was disintegration; and we have only to remember the joy with which the "lost generation" battered down the standards and taboos of its ancestors, immediate and remote, to recognize that not believing was a driving faith. The "lost generation" gave itself that sentimental and exuberant title because it didn't really believe it was lost—like the small boy who didn't really think there was anything wrong with the watch until he had taken it to pieces. Fitzgerald's rich boys and girls might be going to the dogs but the post-war intellectuals, even Scott Fitzgerald himself, were destroying the past to make way for the future. The outlines of that future were obscured by the blazing light of the October Revolution, but its portent was certainly socialism, freedom, the good life, art, music, love; and it was not far off.

Fitzgerald published his only enduring novel, "The Great Gatsby," in 1925, on the crest of that first wave of disillusion which was a form of belief. This book and a few short stories—I am thinking particularly of The Diamond as Big as the Ritz and May Day—will continue to be relevant because they caught and crystallized the underlying "values" of a period. But the novels and stories which preceded "The Great Gatsby" are for the most part dated by their fatal preoccupation with the sensational surfaces of contemporary life. They seem as quaint, and in the same way, as the evening dresses of 1921. As usual the *Saturday Evening Post,* with its fabulous prices and its fabulous circulation, exploited his weakness, not his strength. Fitzgerald's very facility for transferring to print the excrescences of contemporary life—combined with the importunities of editors who do not care what they sell as long as it sells—betrayed him into spending far too much of his energy and skill on short stories about glamorous and, today, boring girls, and boys who are not even glamorous.

After 1925, when "The Great Gatsby" was published, Fitzgerald wrote very little. In 1934 he published his second and last novel, "Tender Is the Night," a confused exercise in self-pity. In 1935 came a book of stories, "Taps at Reveille." Its title and much of its contents are nostalgic and static.

If I seem brutal in my judgment of Scott Fitzgerald, it is perhaps because my first impulse on laying aside his last book was to set him down as the talented victim of a social generation, between wars, which might also be summed up in the epitaph: A man of talent who did not fulfil his early promise. It is a neat and appealing idea and a case can be made for it. I remember the bitterness and defeat of that moment when we became disillusioned with disillusion as a way of life; when we discovered that the future had been delayed and that the October Revolution was nothing but a heap of Stalinist cinders; when self-pity became the only solution for the insoluble. The external events of twenty years may certainly be cited in extenuation of the failure of Scott Fitzgerald to "fulfil his early promise." But that explanation will not explain to posterity why a Joyce, half-blind and beset by personal tragedy, and not a Fitzgerald could overcome the hazards thrown up by an old world disintegrating into a new; why, even in twice-chaotic America, talents lesser than Joyce but stubborn, have survived.

For this fundamental weakness Fitzgerald cannot be blamed. And it must be said for his integrity and his common sense that he did not accept, so far as I know, any of the substitutes for order which have become current in the past decade. It is reported that he was making a new beginning at serious writing just before he died, so perhaps my judgment, like his death, is premature. But I think it is easy to overrate Fitzgerald's powers. He was so touted in his heyday, and there are so many unfortunate circumstances to explain his failure, that he has become a romantic figure, one of the "sad young men" of his own fictions. Yet one cannot read his books, one after the other, without feeling that his was a fair-weather talent which was not adequate to the stormy age into which it happened, ironically, to emerge.

OF THE thousands of books published every year, the great majority deserve to be forgotten and promptly are. But everyone can cite important books which have been buried so completely under the yearly avalanches of print and the exaggerated claims of "best-sellers" that their existence is known only to the unfortunate authors, the custodians of publishers' stockrooms, and a few loyal readers. The Readers Club, newly launched, has therefore a fruitful field in which to operate. This new club proposes to send to its members, for one dollar a copy, twelve books a year which its committee selects as deserving of new and wider circulation. The committee consists of Clifton Fadiman, Sinclair Lewis, Carl Van Doren, and Alexander Woollcott.

The Readers Club has got hold of an excellent idea. But I must confess I was a little dismayed by one note in its am-

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proposing to rediscover some of the "best already-published books"; its first paragraphs describe the venture as a movement and speak with crusading zeal of its intention of rescuing important books from their undeserved obscurity. The anti-climax comes when we read that "Mr. Woollcott has on a number of occasions called your attention to good books. 'Good-bye, Mr. Chips!', for one example, was languishing on its publisher's shelves until Mr. Woollcott told you about it." Mr. Woollcott is a good salesman and it would be less than realistic not to expect to find a good deal of commercial sugar in a concoction designed to be successful. But I hope the elaborate machinery of the Readers Club is not being set up to perpetuate the trivial. That would make the obscurity of the "best already-published books" doubly bitter.

SPEAKING OF the "best already-published books" I have been rereading "The Lives of the Poets" by that well-known literary critic Samuel Johnson. His essay on Milton has a quality which no contemporary account can capture: the quality of a world from which Milton was scarcely a century removed and to which he was still more man than genius. As we read Johnson's testy yet sympathetic account, as of a neighbor whose politics he does not approve but whose ability he recognizes, the writing of "Paradise Lost" becomes for us the actual travail of a human being, blind and beset by the struggles of an earlier age, rather than the creation of a "great poet" remote in time and not quite human. Johnson, as you may remember, took issue with those who had contended that the sales of "Paradise Lost" were shockingly small. The first edition numbered thirteen hundred copies and was sold in two years. But Johnson reminds us that between 1623 and 1664 only two editions of Shakespeare were issued, "which probably together did not make one thousand copies."

HAVING BEEN, as the saying goes, "born and raised" a Mormon, I was interested to see what Maurine Whipple had accomplished in "Giant Joshua" (Houghton Mifflin, $2.75). I found a careful reconstruction, obviously based on conscientious research, of the settlement of a community in Utah by a group of Brigham Young's devoted and hard-working followers. Polygamous family life is given a great deal of attention, and one understands why one of the most frequently sung of Mormon hymns celebrates "Love at Home." But the book is pretty hard going. The fact that Miss Whipple is a pedestrian among writers is largely responsible, but I doubt very much whether even a first-rate novelist could make much out of the Mormon saga in its internal religious, as opposed to its more conventional external pioneering aspects. Joseph Smith was one of the duller prophets and his transcriptions from the "golden plates" were dictated by a heavy-footed spirit. Brigham Young was a superb organizer but there is no mystic excitement to be found in his career or personality. A friend of mine wrote me last summer that he liked Utah so much that he was tempted to settle down and become the T. S. Eliot of the C. J. C. L. D. S. But I'm afraid he would find little grist for his æsthetic or intellectual mill. Mormonism is a practical re- [illegible] eccentric but quite guiltless of ecstasy.

I WAS rather touched by a letter which took me to task for my strictures on the characterization of Maria and the love story of Roberto and Maria in "For Whom the Bell Tolls." This "*Nation* Reader" insists that it was a beautiful and true relation. "I speak so emphatically," he goes on, "because it is an experience I have had recently. If you have not been in real love, you won't know what it is that makes the world move under you, you won't know how it is that as you are in an embrace, you feel that you want to die." I still think—though I would swear that I have been in "real love"—that the affair in "For Whom the Bell Tolls" borders on pulp fiction. My correspondent assures me that he is not a reader of *True Confessions* and I believe him; but it is quite possible that this view of women and this vernacular of love have become so imbedded in the national consciousness that they have become conventions in the love life even of people who don't read *True Confessions.* It is a startling thought—but it doesn't make Maria any more real.

Incidentally, I have been reading the highbrow reviews of Hemingway's book. The pretentious solemnity of some of them made me reflect that even in book-reviewing it is a good idea to let the punishment fit the crime. I was particularly struck by Christopher Isherwood's discovery of a whole series of reincarnations in Hemingway's novels. As the ads so truly say, "For Whom the Bell Tolls" has something for everybody.

MARGARET MARSHALL

After Verdun

AFTERMATH. By Jules Romains. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.75.

"VERDUN" was a magnificent epic; "Aftermath" is inevitably an anti-climax. History offered no other choice. In the West, at any rate, it was an anti-climax to be alive. We had been overwhelmed by the crash and blare of a barbaric and mighty orchestra. In the sudden dramatic hush, a small placid voice was heard: "And I always fry mine in butter." For some, the anti-climax took the form of "normalcy"; for others, of "abnormalcy." There was a desperate clutching at the sweets of life, but no genuine joy of living. Jules Romains must have found it easy to recapture that mood: 1938 strangely resembled 1919. But in the ghastly light of the present, the uneasiness, the fatigue, the obscure dread and remorse of two decades before seem shallow, almost futile. So the work, with its tragic background, is curiously light in tone. It is neither frank comedy nor savage satire, but a series of delicate, amusing, slightly repellent, and slightly disquieting caricatures.

The hero of the second part, our old friend Jallez, offers a charming ironical self-portrait of the *Normalien (Normale* is the glorious premier graduate school in France, and therefore in the world.) Everybody is delighted with Jallez—the shrewd Bishop of Digne, society ladies ripening for a fall, a little newspaper vendor in Nice. Above all, he is well pleased with himself; with the dollars in his pocket—real American dollars; with his resplendent imperial-and-royal dress suit; with his darling sport ensemble ("I had chosen a smallish soft felt hat with a narrow brim in preference to a cap which never suits me well"). He patronizes the older genera- [illegible] the person of the new academician Allory, and he

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despises the younger in the person of Vorge. When he condescends to seduce a very young working girl, he will, virtuously, have us know that he has no snobbish prejudices: "The thought-processes of the 'common people' are not always and necessarily elementary." Whether he describes—for American readers whom he scorns—the putrescence of post-war Vienna, or announces his willingness to lend the League of Nations a hand, it is always with the same ineffably superior smile. He is an insufferable young ass, and fast losing the excuse of youth.

Another small voice is heard in the hush—that of Vorge, a young Dadaist poet. Romains draws him purely and simply as a poseur, a faint distant disciple of Gilles de Rais, Byron, Oscar Wilde, des Esseintes, and most of all as a blurred caricature of Baudelaire. He is an adolescent indulging in horrific make-believe. He needs, in order to fool himself, the faith and admiration of his "gang." His one fear is to be treated as a kid, for then his whole world of silly romancing would dissolve. To impress his public and himself, he stages a Baudelairian masterpiece—the rape of a woman after strangling her. This, at any rate, is tragic reality. But Fate smiles scornfully; the woman revives, the Baudelairian poem turns into a "Droll Tale," and the two pseudo-æsthetes become excellent friends.

The third hero in this volume is Quinette, the quiet, bearded, soft-spoken bookbinder who years ago committed 'the perfect crime," gratuitously, for art's sake, in the purest André Gide spirit. In later volumes, Quinette took to killing women, and readers exclaimed: "Why, Quinette is turning into Landru!"—an all-too-real assassin of the time. In this book, the historical Landru affair breaks into the headlines. And now it is Quinette who cries: "Why, this Landru is a regular Quinette!" He is beginning to worry about his identity. Are there two of them, miraculously alike, or a single mind in two bearded bodies? His confusion grows to the point of madness when Landru is charged with killing one of Quinette's victims. His head reels; he is tempted to go to the police and ask them: "Tell me, in Heaven's name: am I I, or am I Landru?"

This gruesome fantasy on the old Hoffmannesque theme, *Doppelgängerie,* is in the purest Jules Romains vein. He has always loved a hoax (cf. "Les Copains") and he has even evolved a profound theory of "creative mystification." Dr. Knock the quack creates the diseases he diagnoses. Le Trouhadec invents a city, Donogoo-Tonka, and lo! the city springs into existence. It is a form of romantic irony. The poet explores the very limits of the possible (like Vorge with his 365 intercommunicating apartments) but he is ready to add with a disarming smile: "It is a good story anyway."

That element exists in the solemn spookery of *"Quand le navire,"* and in the learned psycho-physiological disquisitions of Dr. Farigoule on extra-retinian vision. It exists also in Abbé Mionnet's mission to Rome, in Laulerque's romantic "Organization." There is more than a touch of it in "The Seven Mysteries of Europe." To be at the same time an epic and dramatic writer of undeniable power, a "man of good will" in the noblest sense of the term, and also a *pince-sans-rire,* a pokerface mystifier—such is the paradoxical achievement of Jules Romains.

ALBERT GUÉRARD

Now It Can Be Told

MARK TWAIN IN ERUPTION. Edited by Bernard DeVoto. Harper and Brothers. $3.75.

OUT of material intended for Mark Twain's "Autobiography," but not used, Mr. DeVoto has produced a remarkably lively and instructive book. It contains about half the left-overs, in as effective a form as first-rate editing can achieve. As for the other half, Mr. DeVoto's excellent preface convinces you it was better left out. Here is a book in which Twain, having his say in the knowledge that it would not be made public until after his death, speaks without compunctions about the world he lived in and the people he met. It is no gentle outpouring, as you may judge from the title.

If brutal frankness and enraged commentary were enough, these opinions from beyond the grave would indeed belong among the great examples of self-revelation. But as Mr. DeVoto says, it was only in certain fiction, like "The Mysterious Stranger," that Mark Twain could nakedly confess his innermost feelings and thoughts: when he chose an overtly personal form of expression, he might be blunt and scathing, but the final revelation was withheld. For one reason, his instinct was stronger than his conscious desire; for another, he knew his emotions far better than he knew what precipitated them. The most interesting things about "Mark Twain in Eruption" are the least intentional. It is clear that while Twain had strong feelings about the human race, he had only a partial perspective on it; and that while he consciously arrived at one philosophy of life, he never completely got rid of another.

Here is a book (most of it dictated between 1906 and 1908) about America, about people, about Twain and his career. It is for the most part a gossipy and anecdotal book, about equally filled with tart and lively humor, a somewhat querulous dissent, and a feeling of outrage. There are some affectionate memories, but it is largely a blast at things and people as they are, full of dislikes and distrusts, of a sense of ubiquitous treachery and impending disaster. Yet the mood of the book as a whole is not one of violent protest but of inveterate cynicism. Twain's final role is rather that of a healthy misanthrope than of an embattled satirist—simply because he did not care enough about things. His never-ending discoveries of how small man is, and how vain and vicious and corrupt, produced disgust, no doubt; but there is a kind of satisfaction in the disgust, almost a kind of pleasure. His exposures pull people down, with no desire ever to lift them up; and he was so absorbed in what facts he found that he never sought very profoundly to learn their causes.

Or perhaps it was all much simpler than that: Twain was pulled two ways, by being a nineteenth-century American as well as a great individual. He might expose and deride the successful, he might even expose and deride "success"; but from childhood he had been taught to believe in the gospel of success, and he never in any philosophic sense achieved better standards of his own. He did not revolt: he reviled. He could not be, obviously, a credulous Republican, or a complacent celebrity, or a flag-waving American. But what (for all his denunciations) did he become except a cynical Republican, a joking celebrity, an American to whom Eu-

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rope failed to teach very much? He attacks the Republican oligarchy—whom he calls "the monarchy"—on page after page, then remarks quietly: "I shall vote for the continuance of the monarchy." The trouble was he was muddled by his own insights into things as they were because he had no real vision—and possibly no real concern—about things as they might be. He never perceived how paralyzing it is to discover what is wrong without knowing what is right.

There was much more to Mark Twain than this, but somehow this is what strikes you most strongly in reading this book. Much of it, taken casually, is merely amusing; most of it is so personal in tone that it seems at times to be settling old scores rather than passing judgment. The judgments, indeed, are too severe without being severe enough. With his fundamental loathing of human nature, it is men's natures that Twain seems to be reviling rather than their values. He sees the fool and fakir in Carnegie, but not what Carnegie represented in modern life. He makes Teddy Roosevelt seem a dangerous wild man rather than a dangerous product of civilization. Even corruption is regarded more as a personal than as a social evil. Twain thought the world was base, not that things had debased it; and such a feeling produced a cynicism that might have its corrosive uses, but that ate into Twain as well as into his victims.

I ought certainly to add how much fun this book is. Twain erupting over Marie Corelli or Senator Clark or Leopold II, or describing his California days or his London dinner parties, or encountering the young Winston Churchill, or telling how he lost fortunes backing all kinds of contraptions, only to balk at backing the telephone—it isn't necessary to add that one does not come upon such good reading too often.

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A Study of Multiple Births

MULTIPLE HUMAN BIRTHS. By Horatio Hackett Newman. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.

THE problem of multiple birth has had much publicity recently in connection with the Dionne quintuplets. Professor Newman has made this problem his own for many years, and the present book bears the mark of the thoroughness of his study. Twins and other multiple births present a unique method of attacking the problem of heredity and environment. Moreover, the study of Siamese twins and related phenomena furnishes some information on the nature of intra-uterine growth. Dr. Newman outlines for us to what extent such studies have added to the knowledge of human development.

As we ascend the evolutionary scale, we find that the number of progeny becomes increasingly smaller; the lowering of the reproductive rate is offset, however, by the care taken to preserve the offspring to maturity. Twins are therefore of great importance because at one step they double the birth rate. They are apparently far more frequent than one would imagine. "One out of every forty-four babies born is a twin," writes Dr. Newman. Triplets are much rarer and quadruplets, of course, rarer yet.

The number of twins to be found in the population and their lack of prominence in the professional, political, and artistic fields suggest that the disadvantage of the twin at birth is carried into his later life. The natal death rate of twins is much higher than that of single births. This is caused in part by unfavorable intra-uterine conditions, not the least of which is mechanical crowding due to the upright posture of the human species.

There are, of course, two kinds of twins, those brought about by the fertilization of two separate eggs and those resulting from the subdivision of a single egg after fertilization. The first kind are merely coincidental brothers and sisters. The second kind are exact duplicates with respect to chromosomal origin. These identical twins present a fascinating study to the environmentalist. In the earlier days of Soviet Russia an immense laboratory was started in which

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hundreds of twins were observed with great care and their likenesses and differences recorded. These experiments were unfortunately abandoned before much definitive work had come out. From Dr. Newman's study, however, this much seems clear: as a class, identical twins have a telepathic communication with each other that normal brothers and sisters do not possess. Indeed, Dr. Newman proposed identical twins to Dr. Rhine as crucial subjects to test the theory of extra-sensory perception.

This book is noteworthy for another reason: it is an official publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In sponsoring a series of popular books by capable authors the Association is performing one of the functions for which it was organized. The very existence of the book implies the recognition of the inter-relation between science and society. Dr. Newman has set an excellent pace in this initial volume of the series.

HUGH H. DARBY

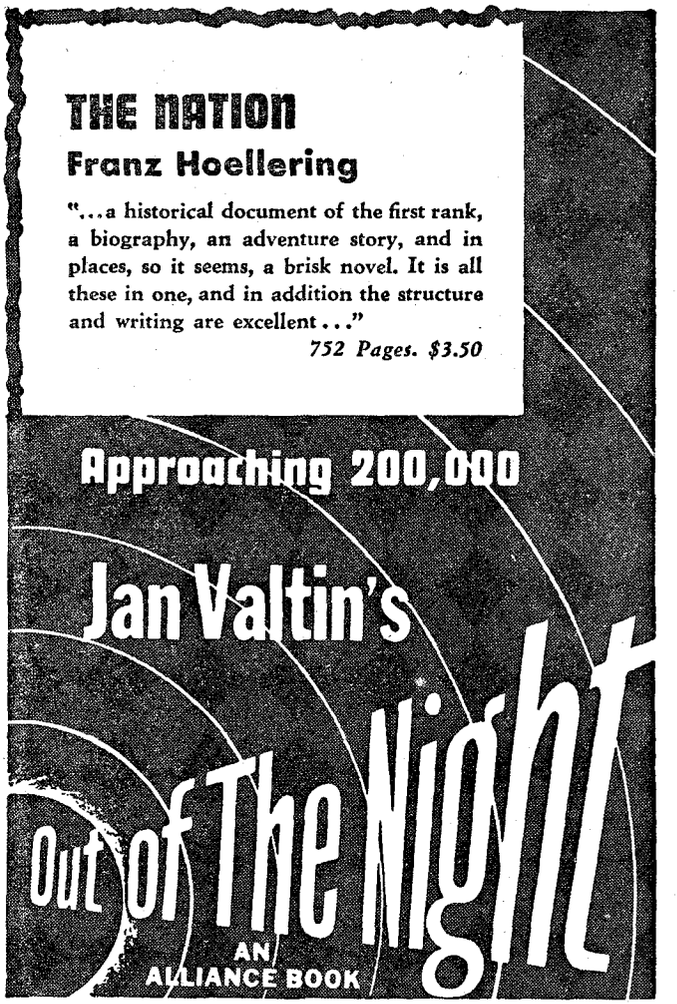
Tales of China at War

IN CHINA NOW. By Winifred Galbraith. William Morrow and Company. $2.50.

A GREAT many books have been written about China in the past few years, but none has been more entertaining than Miss Galbraith's volume of brief portraits. Miss Galbraith has lived in China for some fifteen years and has come to know and appreciate the people with whom she has lived. Although there are points in her otherwise mature pen sketches at which she reveals her missionary background, the latter portions of the book, which tell of the impact of the war in vivid, personal terms, are free of this emphasis. The book does not deal with actual front-line fighting or guerrilla activities. Most of the sketches have as their setting the city of Changsha, which has never been occupied by the Japanese. But because the setting is an interior city, we are able to see the impact of the war on Chinese life even more clearly than if the locale had been the occupied areas.

All sectors of Chinese life are covered by one or another of the sketches. We see the war successively through the eyes of peasants, merchants, bandits, soldiers, refugees, Chinese Christians, old women, students, spies, and many others. The stories are all true ones, with names and places changed so as to protect individuals. In some cases the disguise is more apparent than real, for it is not difficult to recognize certain well-known foreigners in some of the stories. Only a person of wide experience, keen powers of observation, and unusual ability as a story-teller could have achieved the scope of this book, its vividness and understanding, while limiting herself to stories from actual life. The results of Miss Galbraith's rather unusual technique are all that could be desired. No one who has experienced the burning of Changsha through the eyes of Lima or Li Han will ever forget or condone this horrible blunder. It is, in a word, the sort of book that makes you feel you have lived through some of the most stirring events of present-day history. And yet the tragedy is so interspersed with humor and ordinary human frailty that—as in life itself—it becomes quite bearable.

MAXWELL S. STEWART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We have on hand only a small amount of our first issue copies. We are servicing subscribers with this first (valuable) number and will continue to do so for the short while until our supply is exhausted. Among the galaxy of authors whose articles (stories, essays, poems, reviews, etc.) appear in our first number are: Sherwood Anderson, W. H. Auden, Max Ascoli, Stephen Vincent Benét, Henry Bernstein, Ernest Boyd, Jean Cocteau, Jannet Flanner, Horace Gregory, Aldous Huxley, Christopher Isherwood, Frank Kingdon and Heinrich Mann.

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IN BRIEF

ALWAYS THE LAND. By Paul Engle. Random House. $2.50.

An Iowa idyll in which Mr. Engle has stirred together equal portions of young love, high-spirited horses, horse guys, and arguments over government crop loans, to produce a fragrant but not very significant potpourri. To those who languish in the soot-laden air and gasoline fumes of city streets, the book offers a pleasant three-hour escape among the odors of alfalfa hay and buckwheat cakes, to say nothing of more robust whiffs from barn and manure pile.

THE REMARKABLE ANDREW. By Dalton Trumbo. J. B. Lippincott Company. $2.50.

The author of that gruesome *memento mori* called "Johnny Got His Gun" has tied one hand behind his back and tossed out a jaunty little fantasy about the ghost of General Andrew Jackson intervening to save an honest young bookkeeper from the machinations of a crooked political clique in a small Western town. Aside from being a rather thinned-out version of "The Devil and Daniel Webster," it gets in some easy and not very telling cracks at political corruption and at our present foreign policy. It all adds up to nothing more than an entertaining little scherzo.

DRAMA

Darkness Visible

"LADY in the Dark" (Alvin Theater) is a superlatively "good show." The fact is indeed so sensationally obvious that standing room was already being sold at the second performance and the safest course for a reviewer might be to commit himself no further and to let it go at that. But when a chronic spectator finds himself, as I certainly did, following the progress of a "good show" with a great deal more than merely professional interest, he is justified in concluding that the goodness of the show is at least of some novel sort. And that far I must let myself go, even to begin.

First of all, and as Broadway prophets would say, "Lady in the Dark" "has everything." In Moss Hart, who wrote the book, and in Ira Gershwin, who wrote the lyrics, it has two experienced authors with a long record of success behind them. In the composer, Kurt Weill, it has a musician whose talents are at least beginning to be recognized in this country and in Gertrude Lawrence it has a star who, besides being extremely popular, is a superb trouper, willing and able to do everything that practiced technical skill plus great personal charm can do. In addition, there is the imaginative choreography by Albertina Rasch, and some very ingenious as well as smooth-running stage machinery. Finally, someone, it is not quite clear who, has contributed faultless showmanship which has so coordinated everything that the maximum of effect is achieved from each of the elements and one gets, not a series of stunts, but a whole.

You may think that a psychoanalysis, taken seriously and, as it were, acted out on the stage, is an odd subject for even an unconventional musical comedy. You may also think that the scheme by which straight dramatic scenes in the business office of the heroine or the office of her psychiatrist alternate with fantastic musical interludes representing her dreams, is a scheme sure to result in either simple awkwardness or something absurdly pretentious. But if you do think this last you are wrong. The transitions are smooth and come to be expected; the actual content of the fantastic scenes is curiously evocative. They employ certain methods and materials which seem familiar enough parts of a current theatrical tradition but they give to them a subtle and imaginative twist which somehow freshens and almost transforms them. I do not mean to suggest that these scenes are in any sense pretentious or solemn. I do not mean that intellectually one takes them seriously. But I do mean that, artistically, they are astonishingly right, that they achieve more completely than any recent musical comedy or operetta I can remember that mysterious thing called style, and that the style includes both satiric and psychological overtones which give new meaning to otherwise conventional routines. Take, for example, the first of the ballet-pantomime scenes—that in which the heroine dreams herself a reigning belle showered with fantastic luxuries by hosts of suitors and the subject of a song which begins, "The Girl of the Moment! The Smile of the Hour! The Charm of the Week!" In broad outline this "number" and the "routine" through which it is developed are familiar parts of the technique of the review as practiced during the last few decades. In fact, Cole Porter, let us say, would probably regard them as old-fashioned. Yet as here employed the whole takes on a new meaning, thanks to the satiric touch and to the even subtler psychological insight referred to before. Or take the uninhibited ballad called "The Saga of Jenny." Ethel Merman might almost sing it straight in one of her rowdy climaxes, but as superbly performed by Miss Lawrence it is parody plus a touch of hysterical desperation which makes it play its part in the development of the theme of the play as a whole.

In fact, though the fantastic scenes might be expected to be the most difficult to manage they are actually the most interesting parts of the evening. Capably as the straight drama is written and capably as it is acted, especially by Miss Lawrence who switches styles with amazing virtuosity, I am not sure that the play merely as a play is anything more than very slick stage writing. Certainly it is in the scenes where playwright, composer, choreographer, and performer combine that the most striking effects are achieved, and it is not easy to analyze out the contributions of each. That all do contribute I am quite sure, but I am inclined to suspect that the music is the most important and probably most thoroughly original element.

Unfortunately I am not equipped to discuss it as music and can only say that it struck me as more interesting and more effective than any I have heard in the theater for a very long time. In one scene—that of the circus—I thought I recognized unmistakably the idiom of Mr. Weill's score for "The Three Penny Opera," an idiom which I had not discovered in any of the other music he has written since coming to America and one which, indeed, I do not detect in most of the present usually less obviously acid score. Beyond that I can say only that it seems to me wonderfully adapted to its purpose. Whether or not any of the songs will be hits I do not know. Neither do I know whether or not the music would be interesting in a concert program. But I do know that as an accompaniment to an action it is delightfully unhackneyed, expressive, and evocative.

Though Miss Lawrence is the star and shines very brightly, indeed, it would be unfair not to mention an unusually good cast which includes Bert Lytell and Margaret Dale as well as Danny Kaye who deserves special praise both for his performance as the photographer in the dramatic scenes and for various contri-

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butions to the fantasies. All in all, and to return to the beginning, "Lady in the Dark" is a good show and something more. In fact, I think I should even be inclined to call it "an interesting experiment" if that phrase had not come to be reserved almost exclusively for occasions upon which "experiment" really means "regrettable error in judgment" and "interesting" really means that everybody was bored stiff.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

ART

All-American

THE pioneer Tribal Arts show of 1931 marked a turning point in the appreciation of United States Indian arts. An effort was made to assess their æsthetic value rather than to tolerate them as scientific specimens or as tourist curios. The show now current at the Museum of Modern Art finds Americans stranded on their own continent in recoil from a beset world; the patriotic angle may well weigh the scales in favor of these hundred-per-centers of American art, beside whom even Thomas Craven's roster of Americans acquires an immigrant flavor. However genuine our pride in the æsthetic achievements of the Indian, it should be tinged with introspective compunction: some of the objects now on exhibit were "collected" by our War Department, presumably as spoils, while the cover of the extensive catalogue is a shield design that pictures a bear charging fearlessly into the thick of a salvo of United States bullets.

Lest we be accused of sighing for bygone days, let us add that the coming of the white man had also its beneficent influence. The sculptors of the Northwest boomed into a renaissance with the importation of metal tools; to the paleface the plains hunter owes his horse, the forest Indian his beadwork, the Navajo his silversmithing.

That a museum dedicated to modern art stages this show is no haphazard event, for Indian crafts are one of the sources of our own modern style. Amédée Ozenfant, whom I met at the opening, suggested mischievously that Indians were imitating Picasso; but it is a fact that Chilkat blankets were admired by early Cubists as the living tradition on to which their own plastic inventions were grafted, while the distorted spirit masks of the Eskimos, conceived in visions induced by fasting or by drugs, receive today the praise of orthodox surrealists. The élite of each succeeding generation may flirt with what in the vast and complex body of aboriginal art approximates most its fancy of the day, yet, at its best, it far transcends such modish standards.

As is the case in our own art history, where the golden age lies in the past, Indian Michelangelos have long been dead. Unlike its modern counterpart, struggling in a morass of folklore, prehistoric Indian sculpture exhibits a beauty of form strikingly set forth against an unfocused background of ritual pageants that no explorer scooped. Its might is at its best in the group of eastern pipes for the most part made from hardened clay, a material that suggests in spite of direct carving the caress of the modeling thumb. Some artists, relying on texture and geometric shape alone, root the cylinder of the bowl into the leaf shape of the stem at an angle evolved through centuries of use; such specimens match in their functional purity that other great civilized achievement—an English briar pipe. For those less puristically inclined, pipes adorned with animal shapes combine uniquely the observed vivaciousness of animal life, the Egyptian dignity of monolithic masses, with details of minute refinement; for example, the interplay of crossed wing tips and tail feathers on the back of a crested duck, or the wet ripple of muscles on the otter catching its prey.

For the critic who can measure an artist's size only as he matches his skill, Greek-like, against the proportions of the human body, a pipe from Adena Mound erects a chanting warrior whose eight inches of height have been enlarged by the impresario of the show into a photo-mural of heroic size without losing a mite of its compact humaneness. A Mexican influence has been advanced for this piece, but it shows none of the loss of power that provincial art is bound to show, so far-flung from its center of civilization.

All Indian fine arts came into being as side-products of some utilitarian instincts, if one postulates the practical validity of religious instinct. Owing to this lack of cleavage between fine and applied arts, one is dragged imperceptibly in this exhibition from the consideration of the sublime to a limbo of moose-hair embroidery, porcupine-quill mosaics, ribbon appliqué, that prove the squaw a potential subscriber to the *Ladies' Home Companion*.

Indian artists have an amphibian gift of moving at ease among abstract as well as realistic pursuits. In its rare bona fide examples, realism is used for purposes of farce, fable, or history, but most often is a not undignified pandering to the taste of the paleface. Objects classed by our standards as great examples of Indian art—the bear woman suckling her child, the mask of a maiden, the dancing medicine-man—were pot-boilers in the eyes of their makers. The deepest thrust of the Indian mind, the language it chooses to exalt its clan pride, wield magic power, or address the gods, is the language of abstract art: thus the Zuni amuse their children with dolls that are acceptable sculptures by our standards, while the fearful image of their war-god is hewn in such austere primitive style that we despise it as childish; the Eskimo humors his baby with teething-toys that we treasure as ivory statuettes, while his religious masks, carved to perpetuate lofty visions, remain for us shapeless.

One must discard such labels as realistic and abstract if one is to share further the Indian point of view. To illustrate without departing from the organic world: the "abstract" art of the Northwest is more deeply realistic than is the formula for reality in our art. The Haida painter splits the creature he paints and exhibits its innards too—heart, liver, stomach. For not only has he seen the bear and the whale, but he has hunted both, has killed, quartered and cooked them, and his painting sums up the knowledge acquired through all senses and his brain; while the white man is satisfied that he represents a creature when all he describes is its outer bag of skin. One is reminded of the visitor who asked Picasso, apropos of a "still-life with fish," how the fish kept while the work was in progress and of the artist's admission, "I ate it first."

Unfamiliar as we are with the Indian mode of life, our natural reaction to this show is to stress its picturesque and romantic connotations; but the Indian artist manages to assert his greatness within an accepted frame of tribal norms. The pipe-carver, basket-weaver, or sand-painter does not seem to suffer from the infirmity of our own artists who strengthen their personality insofar as they weaken the thread between their work and tradition. The spiritual content that loads the Indian work, a manual perfection deepened by technical impediments, the balance obtained between objective conventions and the personal quota of individual genius, mark the attitude of the Indian artist

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as one of classical integrity. It is on such a plane that this show may bear valid fruits, rather than in a shop-window revival of feather-work and leather tooling.

Though the choice of individual specimens is impeccable, one would wish to admire with more confidence the murals from Awatovi; the original fragment exhibited, as sensitive as a Paul Klee, does not jibe with the cocksureness of the restoration.

The show is staged with ingratiating versatility, even if inverted lighting increases the Hallowe'en note of the collection of masks, rather than furthers an understanding of their beautiful carving. While most will justly delight in the surprises strewn in their path, the serious student may grumble a bit as he is made to grope his way through dim-lit detours. But serious students have already visited the Museum of Natural History and the Heye Museum of the American Indian, where many of the treasures exhibited here managed, up to now, to escape popular adulation.

JEAN CHARLOT

MUSIC

NOT long ago I was playing records for a pianist who is one of the finest musicians I know; and at one point, without telling him what it was, I started the first side of Gieseking's recording of the Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4. He listened expectantly until the piano's phrase that opens the work began to emerge; with the first chords his face darkened; and almost before the phrase had ended he jumped up and demanded angrily: "Who plays in that terrible way? The music is not right with such staccatos"; and rushed to the piano to show me what the phrase sounded like when it was "right."

His reaction, I dare say, will appear excessive to some people—the people who probably find my comments on Stokowski's performances just as wildly extravagant. These people cannot believe that a performance on the Gieseking or Stokowski level of competence can be that bad; or that the differences between the performances of a Schnabel and a Gieseking, a Gieseking and a Horowitz, a Toscanini and a Stokowski are that considerable—enough to make one performance so much better or worse than another; or that there are any criteria for such judgments. But they would not express these doubts about differences in ways of speaking a Shakespeare sonnet or one of Hamlet's monologues. They bring to poetry an understanding that each arrangement of words constitutes a form in which a large part of the meaning of the poem is implicit; that the process of speaking the poem is a process of giving it one physical form or another in actual sound, and in this way one meaning or another; that the process may distort the form and falsify the meaning. And they bring to the particular poem a precise idea of what it is and what it is not, what it means and what it does not, in what spoken physical form it has this meaning and in what form it has not. It is because they bring all this to poetry that they know one way of speaking the poem can be better or worse than another, and recognize better or worse when they hear it; and it is because they don't bring the same understanding and knowledge to music that they can't tell better from worse in musical performance and don't believe anyone else can.

But the musician I have mentioned did bring to Gieseking's treatment of the opening phrase of Beethoven's concerto the understanding that the arrangement of sounds in a musical phrase constitutes a form in which the content of the phrase is implicit; that the process of performing the phrase is a process of giving it one physical form or another in actual sound, and in this way one meaning or another. He did bring a precise idea of what this particular phrase was and what it was not, what it meant and what it did not, in what physical form it had this meaning and in what form it had not. And he was angered by a form which—with its swift, light, detached chords—destroyed the spaciously meditative quality that he thought the phrase should have, and that it does have, for example, in Schnabel's recorded performance. And for the same reasons I am angered by a Stokowski performance of Bach that gives the work a distorted physical form in which it acquires the feverish excitement of the Bacchanale from "Tannhäuser."

There are no Stokowskis acting Shakespeare; and if the public brought to music what it brings to poetry and drama there would be no Stokowski playing Bach. Because it doesn't, the public which understands that a man may speak the lines of Hamlet with sounds that are exciting in themselves but inadequate or wrong or absurd for the effect and meaning of the lines, does not understand this about Heifetz or Horowitz or Stokowski playing Beethoven. For myself, I am bound to marvel at the beauty of the sounds that Heifetz or Horowitz or Stokowski produces with his instrument, but I am equally bound to note that the meaning conveyed by these sounds is not the meaning Beethoven has for me. And if, on the other hand, Toscanini's recent performances of Verdi's Requiem and Beethoven's Missa Solemnis were great performances for me, it was not merely because of tonal marvels like the supple radiance and sheen of the choral sonorities that he produced with the superb Westminster Choir ("They're a fine chorus," as some one remarked, "but they're not that good"). Certainly I had ears for these things, and emotions for what was behind them—that completely personal and wonderful feeling of Toscanini's for the plastic quality of musical sounds. But what made these great performances for me was the effect and meaning which the two works had in the tonal embodiments that Toscanini gave them.

And so with Mitropoulos. What excited the New York Philharmonic audience to cheers, in a performance of Beethoven's Fourth Symphony, was his demonstration of power—power over the minds and wills and bodies of the Philharmonic players, which he demonstrated by exerting power over the music: with *fp's* on a single chord augmented to explosive *fffffpppp's*, with crescendos and decrescendos over a measure or two augmented to violent expansions and contractions of sonority, with phrasing that twisted the shape of the phrase. Certainly one wants a conductor to have competence in conducting: but this competence—like competence in manipulating a violin or a piano—is not properly an end in itself; it is the means for the achievement of the proper end of musical performance—a form in actual sound in which the piece of music has the meaning and effect it should have. If that Philharmonic audience had brought to the performance an idea of what Beethoven's Fourth Symphony is and what it means and what it must sound like to have that meaning, it would have realized that Mitropoulos—in effect using the work as something with which to demonstrate his virtuosity—was distorting its form and falsifying its character and meaning. As for me, since my only interest in a conductor—whether it is Toscanini or Mitropoulos—is in what meaning the music has when he conducts it, and since I have an idea of what Beethoven means, I don't want Mitropoulos around conducting Beethoven.

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

Who Owns the Future?

Dear Sirs: The only proof Max Lerner brings forward to show that socialism and fascism cannot be the same thing is that "if they are, millions of blasted lives have had no meaning." Unfortunately, history has a long record of lives blasted for false or unproven beliefs. Lerner insists on using the term socialism only for the society he and many others of us would like to see established. Dennis insists that one must use terms to describe actualities, not aspirations or dreams. This is not, it seems to me, Dennis's "clever strategy," as Lerner thinks, but his realism. Socialism in practice, i. e., state ownership or control of the means of production and distribution has proved in Russia and Germany to mean a party tyranny, persecution of all dissenters, terror, and the concentration camp, and an end to trade unions and all other safeguards of workers' rights and everyone else's rights and liberties. The fact that this is not what socialists the world over desired does not prove that it is not socialism. We can still believe that a democratic form of socialism is possible and work to achieve it, but we never shall if we treat fascism as an accident or as the result of the peculiar wickedness of a man or of a nation.

When Lerner says that the snags which prevent the establishment of a democratic form of socialism lie in the realm of politics ("in the realm of class resistance and press distortions and in the realm of power"), he is begging the question. It is precisely these snags in the realm of politics which so far history has shown cannot be unraveled except by compulsion and fear. The liberal socialists failed to unravel them in the post-war years; the Nazis have done it by compulsion in preparation for war, the British are doing it under the stimulus of fear of defeat. That fear is producing in Britain the whole array of strategic controls of the economic system which we must call national socialism, since it is socialist and certainly not international. So far the steps taken in Britain have been taken by consent because, as Dennis truly says, war is the great unifier. But can we be sure that the capitalist wolf and the labor lamb will lie down together once they have no lion to fear? Once the national unity engendered by the war is destroyed how are the "snags" Lerner speaks of to be dealt with except by compulsion—whether the snags be the opposition of capitalists to surrendering their economic power or the opposition of wage earners to surrendering the right to strike, or the right to starve rather than work under any conditions the state decrees? Schuman, while retaining his liberal values, faces the problem; and it is only by facing it that we can hope to solve it. FREDA UTLEY

New York, January 28

Housing Economics

Dear Sirs: The dynamic side of capitalism is its machine production of consumption goods. Its static side is its handicraft production of "long-term investments," chiefly in the form of land improvements (building construction). The latter is the part of capitalism we inherited from our feudal forbears, and it is the dying part. The feudal formula that made the manipulation of land and credit easy rested on the agglomeration of populations for safety within walled areas where land was scarce, and on the fact that the low-income masses were compelled to live in forms of shelter so costly as to drain off much of their earnings in rent and interest. So long as the alternative was death by violence, the consumer paid his 10 per cent interest per month and up to 40 per cent of his income in rent without complaint. But as mass freedom, leisure, and mobility increased, the very basis of the feudal formula was undermined.

When this formula collapsed in 1933 and it became necessary to revive confidence in it, we began to plaster a prettier façade over small bits of the spreading area of urban decay. Liberal magazines quickly fell in behind this sentimental and wholly vicious plan. Why vicious? The investment per family in slum areas for shelter and appurtenances is already $15,000. With slum clearance, public works appurtenances, and cost of amortization, this investment is doubled. How amortize an investment of $30,000 per family from an average yearly family income of $1,200? It can't be done under socialism or any other system.

Because the funds that private investors used to put safely into congested-area construction now go sour there, even with 100 per cent federal subsidies and 80 per cent mortgage guaranties, the private investor is acquiring the habit of loaning his excess funds to the government to make work. The most exciting kind of made work, the kind for which funds are most easily appropriated and soonest spent, the kind that makes us all shout for the lifting of debt limitations, is military made work. This is the kind of work people are doing in every nation where the old feudal formula is being retained. In Italy and in Germany a program of public works shifted inevitably into one of military made work so designed that someone else will have to pay the bill. England and America are now following suit.

The design of shelter lies at the very core of the world problems now confronting us. All design tends to conform to the pattern of the successful man's house. Once this pattern falls behind changing ways of work, war, leisure, and mobility, all design soon falls behind. Then private investments go sour. Hoarding compels made work. Military programs quickly become necessary. The victory or defeat of Italy, Germany, England, and America will do nothing to solve this problem except as the bomber effectively drives a final nail into the coffin of the feudal formula: land and money monopolies built on pushing the masses into houses many times too costly in areas where land is scarce.

No matter what the form of political control, our machines will compel us to industrialize shelter design—reduce the home increasingly to a form of semi-durable consumption goods owned by its occupant. For a generation the motor car has been a small portion of the total shelter of a majority of American families. The motor car is shelter that has allied its design with the dynamic side of capitalism. Today the small boy defines "home" as the place where everyone waits for dad to get back with the car. But not in New York, the place of all others still in the grip of the feudal formula.

That nation will win its war and its peace that merges the technics of war and of peace. The factories, machines, mechanics now building weapons of defense can be turned overnight, almost, to the production of "machines-for-

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living-in" if design is now adapted to this end. The static side of capitalism still thinking in terms of long-term investments in improvements on its scarcest land gave England its Munich and is now making it easy for the Germans to erase London from the map. The static side of capitalism, the dying half, still dictates shelter design for the world masses. Have these facts no importance for your readers?

CORWIN WILLSON

Flint, Mich., December 30

Progressive Students League

Dear Sirs: Robert Spivack, in his recent article "Youth Reorganizes" (*The Nation,* January 18), indicated a complete misunderstanding of the relation between the Progressive Students League and the Youth Committee Against War.

The Progressive Students League was organized in the New York colleges about a year ago by a group of independent students who felt that they needed some other means of expressing their united beliefs than that offered by existing organizations. Last spring it had grown to the point of sponsoring the annual Spring Strike Against War on most of the New York campuses. Since that time we have been spreading on a national basis.

Spivack, in calling the PSL "isolationist," attempts to label us with a term in general disrepute. "Isolationist" has now been so overused that it is meaningless in describing the aims of an organization.

It is illuminating to note that the major portion of Spivack's article is devoted to a pro-war group, the Student League for Progressive Action, whose actual student membership is negligible, while only a paragraph is devoted to the Youth Committee Against War, whose student membership in itself represents one of the most powerful of anti-war forces.

JOHN DIEHL,

National Correspondence Sec'y, PSL

Yellow Springs, O., January 25

Labor's Rights Contest

Dear Sirs: May I call the attention of your readers to two contests for worker-students being conducted by the Workers Defense League, national non-partisan defense agency of the labor movement? Persons attending trade union, WPA workers' education, or other labor educational classes in community centers, Y's, etc., are eligible. Prizes are $25, $15, and $10 in each contest. Closing date is April 30, 1941.

The first is for "letters-to-the-editor." Students are asked to write a letter of about 200 words to local editors calling attention to current violations of, or threats to, labor's rights in the neighborhood or the nation. If printed, the clipping should be sent to us; if not, a copy of the letter. The second contest is for essays of from 250 to 400 words on "How Are Labor's Rights Threatened?"

Judges are George Baldanzi, executive vice-president, Textile Workers Union, C. I. O.; Rose Pesotta, vice-president, I. L. G. W. U., A. F. of L.; Thomas W. Patterson, international vice-president, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, A. F. of L.; Harry W. Laidler, New York City Councilman, executive director, League for Industrial Democracy; and Arthur Garfield Hays, counsel, American Civil Liberties Union.

Available to students and teachers by writing the undersigned at 112 East 19th Street, New York City, are free study material and a 35-page booklet on "Labor's Rights in the United States," which sells for 15 cents (10 cents in quantities of 10). The winning letters and essays will be published by the Workers Defense League.

ISABEL TAYLOR,

Workers Defense League

New York, January 23

Poll-Tax Jury

Dear Sirs: Jonathan Daniels's excellent column on the Odell Waller case in your issue of December 21 summarizes the issues accurately and fairly. However, I changed my opinion of the case's significance about a week after I discussed it briefly with him over long-distance telephone, and when I was better informed as to the circumstances. It is therefore no longer accurate to say that I regard it as "merely a murder, not involving injustice to the convicted Negro." I am not prepared to say definitely that injustice was done, but I confess that I am not sure either way.

We have published two editorials in the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* stating that the case seems to provide one more argument against the unjustifiable poll tax, since the grand jury which indicted Waller, and included two Negroes, was composed of persons "entitled to vote and to hold office under the constitution of this state," in accordance with Virginia law. Officials of Pittsylvania County, where the trial was held, deny that the poll tax entered in any way into the selection of the petit jury which gave Waller the electric chair. Governor Price has granted him a reprieve until March 14 to permit an appeal.

Early handbills on the case were misleading and inflammatory, but later literature is much more nearly in conformity with the facts. However, there is nothing anywhere therein to inform the public that Waller shot Davis twice in the back, when Davis, according to uncontradicted witnesses, was unarmed.

VIRGINIUS DABNEY,

Editor, Richmond *Times-Dispatch*

Richmond, Va., January 30, 1941

Correction

Christopher Lazare is assistant editor of *Decision,* Klaus Mann's new publication, and not of *Direction* as was stated in *The Nation* of February 1.

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BARBARA PAINE has recently returned from her second visit to Japan, where she lived two years in a Japanese household.

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THE NATION, 55 Fifth Ave., New York. Price 15 cents a copy. By subscription—Domestic: One year $5; Two years $8; Three years $11. Additional Postage per year: Foreign, $1; Canadian, $1. The Nation is indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, Index to Labor Periodicals, Public Affairs Information Service, Dramatic Index. Two weeks' notice and the old address as well as the new are required for change of address.

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